

Second Story Press

Advanced Level ESL

# TEACHER RESOURCE GUIDE

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## *Soldier Doll*

ISBN: 978-1-927583-29-6

Lexile: HL600L Guided Reading: Z

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# Book Summary

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*Soldier Doll* is a work of historical fiction. The novel begins in 2007 in Toronto, but travels back and forth in time. There are several settings, including Toronto in 2001 and 2007, England and Belgium during World War I, Berlin, Germany and Terezin Concentration Camp during World War II, and Da Nang during the Vietnam War. What most of these locations have in common is that they are immersed in war. The thread that links these settings and corresponding storylines is the soldier doll, which symbolizes love, sacrifice, mercy, hope, discrimination, and hatred.

In 2007, Elizabeth is a miserable teenager whose parents have just moved to Toronto from Vancouver. Her father is a Canadian soldier about to be deployed to Afghanistan. She sees an antique doll dressed in a soldier's uniform at a neighbourhood yard sale and buys it as a birthday gift for him. Initially, Elizabeth is unaware that she is only the latest in a long line of the soldier doll's owners. The doll's story actually begins in World War I when a young English poet named Meg Merriweather gives it to her soldier fiancée before he leaves to fight in Europe. The doll then surfaces in Berlin, Germany and Terezin Concentration Camp in World War II, on to an American soldier serving in Vietnam who gives it to an orphaned child, and finally ends up in Elizabeth's hands. When she meets a new friend named Evan, Elizabeth learns about a poem called "Soldier Doll," and wonders whether the doll in the poem is the one she now has.

*Soldier Doll* was written by Jennifer Gold in 2014. It is 277 pages long and was originally written as young adult fiction. Each chapter is twenty to thirty pages long, and the story is told in several flashbacks set in different historical eras, flashing forward to Toronto in 2007. Multiple characters are introduced in the flashback chapters and the dialogue is written in different kinds of English because the settings represent a variety of historical settings. Because of the plot's complexity and multiple characters, the book is appropriate for advanced ESL learners who are proficient readers. Also, *Soldier Doll* describes, in some graphic detail, adult situations including pre-marital sex, miscarriage, discrimination, violence and cruelty, and death in war. The themes that are explored include love and loss, identity, anti-semitism, sacrifice, and the tragedy of war.

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PART A

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Pre-Reading Activities

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## ACTIVITY 1

# Group Discussion: A Treasured Childhood Toy

*Have the students bring into class a childhood doll, toy, family heirloom or any object that has special meaning for them. Try to have them bring objects that are older and have been owned and appreciated by several family members. Ensure that students are organized into small multicultural groups.*

 ACTIVITY 1

## Group Discussion: A Treasured Childhood Toy

### Directions:

Take turns showing the other members of your group the object that you have brought. Talk about how it came into your family and what it means to you and other family members. Answer these questions.

- a. How old is the object?
- b. What country does it come from?
- c. Has it been owned by one or more than one family members?
- d. How do your family members feel about it? Why do they have this feeling?
- e. Was this object with them during either difficult or happy times in their lives? Do you know any special stories about the object?
- f. Does the object symbolize a bigger idea in your religion or culture? (for example: luck, happiness, religious faith)
- g. What is your special feeling for the object?
- h. How would you feel if it were lost, stolen or damaged?

 ACTIVITY 2

## Mapping and Plotting the Story

*Soldier Doll is an epic story that takes place in several settings all over the world. Use this activity to familiarize students with the different locations of the story.*

*You might also track the doll's journeys using a wall map in the back of the classroom.*

 ACTIVITY 2

## Mapping and Plotting the Story

1. Using a search engine, find a map of the world and print it out. The map should be blank.
2. Label the following countries and cities on your map. If you don't know them, refer to another detailed map that you can find online or in an atlas, a hard copy book of maps. Also, write the appropriate date beside the place names. These are the dates when the doll "lived" in these locations.
  - a. Toronto, Ontario, Canada, 2001 and 2007
  - b. Devon, England, 1918
  - c. Ypres, Belgium, in World War I
  - d. Berlin, Germany, 1939
  - e. Terezin, Czechoslovakia (now called the Czech Republic), 1944
  - f. Da Nang, Vietnam, 1970
3. Keep this map with you as we read the book. We will be using it to track the soldier doll's journey through time. Before reading each chapter, make sure that the locations are labelled. As you are reading the book, trace the journey of soldier doll by drawing lines from one setting to the next. For example, going from Devon, England to Ypres, Belgium was the doll's first journey.

 ACTIVITY 3

## Small Group Research

*The purpose of this activity is to have students research basic facts about the historical settings of the novel.*



 ACTIVITY 3

## Group Research

### Directions:

1. Organize yourselves into groups of four or five students.
2. Each group will be assigned one of these topics to research.
  - a. England and World War I
  - b. Battle of Ypres in Belgium
  - c. Nazi Germany and World War II
  - d. *Kristallnacht* (Night of Broken Glass)
  - e. Terezin Concentration Camp
  - f. The Vietnam War and the United States
  - g. September 11, 2001 (or 9/11)
  - h. The war in Afghanistan and the United States
3. Using a search engine, find and read through two or three documents to research key facts about your assigned topic.
4. As a group, write a fact sheet with 10–15 key facts about your topic.

Write your fact sheet in point-form style and post it on your class website or make a hard copy. Each group's fact sheet should be displayed in chronological order and referred to as you read the book.

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PART B

Reading Activities

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## ACTIVITY 4

### Graphic Organizer: Character Webs

*Because the book has many flashback chapters, have the students create a graphic organizer to help them remember the characters in each flashback. As they are reading each chapter, have the students create a character web to remember that chapter's characters and their connection to each other. Students write the main character's names in the centre of the web and the other characters surrounding it. Character webs will be useful in discussing and writing about the book.*



## ACTIVITY 5

### Chapter Questions

*These questions require students to analyze setting, character, theme, conflict, and symbolism. They can be used for oral discussion, or a written assignment for student evaluation.*

 **ACTIVITY 5**

## Chapter Questions

### Chapter 1: Toronto, Canada, 2007 (pages 1–24)

1. Why does Elizabeth think that the doll she found at the garage sale is unusual?
2. Why does Elizabeth want a present for her father?
3. What two changes in Elizabeth's life upset her?
4. How does Elizabeth feel about her new home?
5. How does Elizabeth's temperament show that she is a typical teenager?
6. How does Elizabeth's father feel about "soldier baby"? Where will he take it?
7. What is the relationship between Elizabeth and her parents?
8. Why can we say that Elizabeth has mixed feelings about being an only child?
9. What prompts Elizabeth to recall a childhood experience?
10. Why is Elizabeth's homesickness understandable at this time in her life?

### Chapter 2: Toronto, Canada, 2007 (pages 25–39)

11. What are several reasons that Liz feels so miserable?
12. Why does Liz end up in a bookstore?
13. Who is Evan? Why does Liz enjoy talking to him?
14. What poem by Margaret Merriweather does Evan tell Liz about? Why does she become fascinated by the poem?
15. Why can we infer that Evan and Liz like each other?
16. How do we know that Liz is curious about the soldier doll?

### **Chapter 3: Devon, England, 1918 (pages 40–65)**

17. What was the relationship between Ned and Meg?
18. How did Ned defend his decision to become a soldier to Meg?
19. Ned said he “would get a white feather” (page 44) if he didn’t fight in World War I. What did getting a “white feather” symbolize?
20. What symbol of love did Ned give Meg? What commitment did it symbolize between them?
21. How is the name “Merriweather” connected to the previous chapter?
22. What was Meg’s artistic talent?
23. How did Meg get her doll?
24. The soldier doll was Meg’s confidant. What does “confidant” mean?
25. What is “handfasting”? What did the gesture symbolize to Meg and Ned?
26. How did Meg change the doll’s appearance? Why did she give it to Ned?
27. When Meg realized that she was pregnant, she said she “could endure the shame.” (page 59) Why would she feel shame at being pregnant at this particular time in history?
28. Why can we say that Meg experienced a double tragedy?
29. Why did Meg write her poem Soldier Doll?

### **Chapter 4: Toronto, Canada, 2007 (pages 66–80)**

30. This chapter is in “flash forward.” What does that mean to the plot and the characters of the story?
31. Why does Liz’s mother often feel guilty?
32. What does Liz suspect about her soldier doll?
33. What is carbon dating? How will this process help Liz to know about the doll?
34. Why does the discussion about uniforms make Liz nervous?
35. Dr. McLeod refers to the doll and says, “He must have so many stories to tell. I wonder where he’s been.” (page 80) The rhetorical device she uses to describe the doll is personification. What is a good definition for personification? Why does she wish that the soldier doll could talk?

## Chapter 5: Berlin, Germany, 1939 (pages 81–106)

36. How do we know that this chapter is another example of flashback?
37. Who were Franz and Hannah Roth?
38. Why did the religion of the Roth family create difficulty in their lives?
39. Who were the Troublesome Twins? Why did they become such close friends?
40. What happened to Franz and Max on the battlefield of Ypres?
41. How did Ned become connected to Franz and Max?
42. Why could we say that Ned's death was merciful?
43. How did Franz get the soldier doll?
44. Why did Franz change the doll's uniform?
45. Who were the Nazis? How did they threaten Franz and other Jews?
46. Why did Franz put the soldier doll out of sight?
47. Why was Franz making plans to take his family out of Germany?
48. What happened to the homes and businesses of Jews in Berlin? Why did this happen?
49. Why did Hanna give the soldier doll to her father?
50. Why did the police officer arrest Franz and his neighbours?
51. What important confession did Franz's neighbour Joseph make to him?
52. Why did Franz and the other jailed men panic and scream to be released?
53. What sacrifice did Franz make for Joseph?
54. What did the soldier doll symbolize to Franz as he travelled in the truck to the prison camp?
55. Why do you think Franz still kept the soldier doll?

## Chapter 6: Toronto, Canada, 2007 (pages 107–115)

56. Why is Elizabeth returning to the bookstore wearing make-up and with painted toenails?
57. What was Evan's attitude when Liz says she may have found the soldier doll of the Merriweather poem?
58. Why does Evan think that the doll is an "historical artefact"? (page 112)

59. What exciting news do Liz and Evan discover on the Internet?
60. What suggestion does Evan make? Why does he make this suggestion?

## **Chapter 7: Terezin, Czechoslovakia (pages 116–140)**

61. Why can we infer that Eva was one of the deported Jews during World War II?
62. What were some signs that Franz was now confused or traumatized?
63. Why was Eva recalling key memories of her life before she was a prisoner?
64. Who gave Eva the doll? What else did he do for Eva?
65. Why did Franz think that he and Eva were lucky to be sent to Terezin? Do you think that he was being honest or sarcastic? Give a reason for your opinion.
66. Why did Franz give the soldier doll to Eva?
67. Why was Eva grateful for her gift?
68. What is propaganda? Why did Eva think that the Red Cross visit to Terezin was propaganda?
69. How can we infer that many prisoners at Terezin were creative and talented people?
70. Why did Ella and other children in the opera believe it was important to perform *Brundibar* well for the Red Cross visitors? Was their belief realistic? Why or why not?
71. Mr. Krasa told the children, “if we put in a poor effort—then the Nazis have already won the war. . . . It means we’ve given up our belief in ourselves.” (page 130) What did he mean by these words?
72. Why were the prisoners so terrified when the lists went up?
73. How did Franz rescue Eva and give her hope of survival?
74. Why were Eva’s parents and other prisoners being deported?
75. What important information about family did Eva’s parents give her?

## **Chapter 8: Toronto, Canada, 2007 (pages 141–146)**

76. What is Dr. McLeod’s opinion of the authenticity of the soldier doll?
77. Why did different owners of the soldier doll change its appearance?
78. What does Elizabeth plan to do with the doll?
79. What is Dr. McLeod most curious about?

## Chapter 9: Da Nang, Vietnam, 1970 (pages 147–180)

80. Where is Vietnam?
81. What were Mike, Boots, and College doing in Vietnam?
82. What were the living conditions of the platoon of soldiers in Vietnam?
83. Mike's commander referred to him as "leadership material." (page 149) What did these words show about Mike's ability and character?
84. Who gave Mike the soldier doll? Why was it given to him?
85. Why do you think that the five soldiers had a close relationship? Red asked, "What's the point of this damn war again, sir?" (page 151) Why would soldiers have mixed feelings about fighting that war?
86. The soldiers' assignment was "Search and destroy." (page 151) In your opinion, what kind of job did they do?
87. What was Mike doing the year before he was sent to Vietnam?
88. How was a lottery used to draft young men to serve in Vietnam?
89. What was Mike's opinion of American President Richard Nixon?
90. What did it mean that the soldiers were being stalked? (page 160) Who was stalking them?
91. What words could you use to describe the deaths of soldiers in Vietnam?
92. Who was Karen? Why was she speaking at Mike's college?
93. What are four things that some young American men did to avoid being drafted to Vietnam?
94. Red lost his left hand because of a "booby trap" (page 169) What was a booby trap?
95. Why did Mike think that going to Canada would be dishonourable? (page 173)
96. Why do you think Karen refused to wait for Mike?
97. Mike believes that "the other guys seemed to have built up an immunity to the poverty and the suffering, vaccinated against it by constant exposure." (page 177) What did he mean by these words?
98. Why do you think Mike gave the soldier doll to the little Vietnamese girl?



## **Chapter 10: Toronto, Canada 2007 (pages 181–199)**

99. What important invitation does Liz receive in Margaret Merriweather's letter?
100. Why can we infer that Liz is becoming more mature and adjusting to her new life?
101. What information about Evan upsets Liz?

## **Chapter 11: Toronto, Canada 2007 (pages 200–206)**

102. Why does Liz's mother say to her, "You're not punishing anyone but yourself."? (page 202) What is she referring to? What does Liz's mother want her to do?
103. Why does Evan want to see Liz again?

## **Chapter 12: Toronto, Canada, 2001 (pages 207–245)**

104. What horrible event was Alex watching on television?
105. Why did Alex's father say, "It's the end of the world."? (page 209)
106. Why were Alex and his father relieved when they got a telephone call?
107. Why can we infer that Alex was a sensitive and thoughtful person?
108. Where did Alex's mother get the "antique" in Alex's room?
109. Where was Alex's mother born? Why can we infer that Alex's mother was in an earlier chapter of the book?
110. In your opinion, why didn't she want to talk about Vietnam or her early years in Canada?
111. What was a "draft dodger"? (page 218) How does being a draft dodger explain why Alex's father moved to Canada?
112. Why did Alex say that he is "sort of Vietnamese and sort of not"? (page 219)
113. What was his mother's attitude to her Vietnamese heritage?
114. Who was Osama Bin Laden and what was his connection to the attacks on September 11, 2001.
115. What does Alex's decision not to take the soldier doll to university show about his personality?
116. Why did Alex go to the army recruiting event?
117. What reasons was Rory, the army recruiter, using to convince Alex to join the army?
118. Alex was "ambivalent" about the war? (page 232) What does ambivalent mean?

119. Why did Alex's father have such a strong negative opinion about the war in Afghanistan?
120. What did Alex's geometry marks mean to his future in university?
121. Why did Alex's mother call his view of war "romantic"? (page 240)
122. Why did Alex imply that his father was a coward?
123. Alex's mother said, "I don't think that this is as black and white as you believe it is." (page 243)  
What was she saying about the reality of war?
124. Why did Alex's mother finally accept his decision to enlist in the army?
125. Why did Alex decide to take the soldier doll with him to Vietnam?
126. What were reasons that Alex left home angry with his parents?

### **Chapter 13: Toronto, Canada, 2007 (pages 246–259)**

127. Why is Elizabeth's mother now in charge of the house? (page 247)
128. How had her father tried to get more information about the soldier doll?
129. Who was Eva Goodman? Who gave her the soldier doll? When?
130. What did Eva do with the doll after World War II?
131. Who else contacted Liz's father about the doll?
132. What happened to Alex when he served in Afghanistan?
133. What visit are Liz and her parents planning?
134. What tragic news does Liz receive when she gets home?
135. What other news will help Liz and her mother to become closer?

### **Chapter 14: Toronto, Canada, 2007 (pages 260–270)**

136. Why aren't there any more flashback chapters in the book?
137. Who calls Liz's home to contact Liz's deceased father about the soldier doll?
138. In your opinion, why isn't Liz interested in the soldier doll anymore? What does the doll symbolize to her? Why?
139. Why is Liz touched by Mike's description of his wartime experiences?

140. Why does Mike become emotional when Liz tells him of the Vietnamese Canadian woman who had the doll?
141. Mike says to Liz, “It’s hard to be the one who lives. The guilt at still being alive, and the pain because they’re not.” (page 265) Why are these words true for Liz, her mother, and several characters in the book?
142. How can we infer that Liz is becoming a mature young adult? Why would she feel that she would need to do that?
143. Why do Liz and her mother decide to visit Margaret Merriweather?

## **Chapter 15: Epilogue (pages 271–277)**

144. Why does this book have an epilogue? Predict what is going to happen in this chapter? Why is it important for this particular story to have an epilogue? Why or why not?
145. Meg says to Liz, “I understand.” (page 274) How would that remark make Liz feel?
146. Why does Liz feel guilty that she has the doll and did not give it to her father?
147. What missing pieces of information does Meg provide about the soldier doll?
148. Why do you think that Meg wants Liz to keep the doll?
149. Why does Liz react with anger to Meg’s generosity?
150. What are two ways that we know that Meg is a realistic person?
151. Who will be the next owner of the soldier doll?



## ACTIVITY 6

# Our Image of Soldier Doll: Group Oral Presentation

*This activity would work well to differentiate instruction for students who are visual learners and need a hands-on activity to improve their comprehension. It requires students to work in groups to create their image of the soldier doll. For this activity, the teacher will need to prepare multi-media supplies, such as paper, drawing pencils, pieces of clothing, markers and paints. If available, students can use computer technology to do the assignment.*

 ACTIVITY 6

## Our Image of Soldier Doll: Group Oral Presentation

### Directions:

- a. Organize yourselves into groups of four or five students.
- b. Choose one chapter of the book that features the soldier doll and reread it. Focus especially on any parts of the chapter that give specific descriptions of the doll.
- c. Take into consideration the time in history that the chapter is set in. If possible, do Internet research of “soldier dolls” of that era to help you create the soldier doll using any media that you wish.
- d. Think about the colour, uniform, and accessories for the doll.
- e. The soldier doll can be drawn, painted, or created three dimensionally.
- f. If you are comfortable with computer technology you may use a graphics program to create the soldier doll. Try to make your doll big enough to be seen by the whole class.
- g. When you’re finished, your group will do a short presentation in front of the whole class.

 ACTIVITY 7

## Creating a Graphic Organizer: Character Chart

*This activity can be done to prepare students to write a paragraph or an essay about Elizabeth, the protagonist of the story.*

 ACTIVITY 7

## Creating a Graphic Organizer: Character Chart

### Directions:

1. Working with a partner, create a character chart for Elizabeth that looks similar to this. Brainstorm and write details that describe 8 to 10 of her personal qualities that you see in the story. Examples have been started for you.

#### ELIZABETH'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

##### PERSONAL QUALITY

##### EXAMPLE/DETAIL

resentful

– didn't want to move from Vancouver to Toronto and was angry with her parents

immature

– uncomfortable with her parents' displays of affection

lonely

– has no friends when she first moves to Toronto

2. Add several more personal qualities to the list, and add more examples of the qualities that have already been identified.

 ACTIVITY 8

## Writing a Character Sketch

### Directions:

Elizabeth is the protagonist of *Soldier Doll* who changes and develops from the beginning to the end of the story. Using the character chart you made in Activity 7, write a paragraph that describes four or five of her personal qualities. Also, explain at least one way that Elizabeth changes from the beginning to the end of the story.”

Make sure that your paragraph (8–12 sentences) includes the following:

- a. an interesting title
- b. a topic sentence that introduces your topic
- c. a body, which includes several main points, with details and examples which support those points
- d. a concluding sentence that summarizes your topic and where you can give a personal opinion about it

Your paragraph will be evaluated for content, organization, and communication skills.



 ACTIVITY 9

## Writing a Character Essay

*The same graphic organizer that students created to write the character paragraph can also be used to write a descriptive or persuasive essay. Before they do the assignment, make sure that the students have had previous instruction on essay organization and writing.*

 ACTIVITY 9

## Writing a Character Essay

Elizabeth, the protagonist, of *Soldier Doll*, experiences a lot of character development in the story. Write a five-paragraph essay where you describe three changes in her character. For each change that you identify, explain the reasons that she changes.

Make sure that your essay has these parts:

- a. an introduction with a clear thesis statement, and three main points
- b. a body that has 3 paragraphs, with each paragraph describing its own main point
- c. a conclusion that restates the thesis and main points, and
- d. gives a personal opinion of the topic.



## ACTIVITY 10

# Soldier Doll: Opinions Survey

*This activity requires students to express their opinions about topics explored in the novel. It can be used as a warm-up or preparation for opinion writing assignments. Make sure to also introduce opinion phrases that students can use in their conversations.*

## Soldier Doll: Opinions Survey

### Directions:

- a. Interview students to discover their opinions on the following questions.
- b. When you are the one being interviewed, give your opinion and reasons to support it. Feel free to have a discussion with different students and to express your agreement or disagreement with their opinions.
- c. After you finish the survey, one of the classmates will be assigned to take a tally of opinions. The class can then discuss the different issues presented in the survey.

1. Did Elizabeth become more mature by the end of the story?
2. Did whoever had the soldier doll think of it as lucky or unlucky?
3. Did Max make the right choice to kill Ned on the battlefield of Ypres?
4. Do you understand why Franz sacrificed himself to try to save Joseph?
5. Do you think that the prisoners in Terezin should have performed the opera *Brundibar* for the Red Cross visitors?
6. Should young people be drafted into an army and forced to fight in a war?
7. Was it right for American soldiers to fight in Vietnam and Canadian soldiers to fight in Afghanistan, both faraway countries?
8. Was it right for some American men to come to Canada as “draft dodgers” to avoid fighting in Vietnam?
9. Is it understandable that Alex’s mother didn’t like to talk about her childhood in Vietnam and early years in Canada?
10. Did Meg Merriweather make the right decision when she let Liz keep the soldier doll?

 ACTIVITY 11

## Group Opinions Essay Outline

*The purpose of this exercise is to have students prepare an opinion essay outline.  
You can use the outline provided or find an essay outline template on the Internet.*

 ACTIVITY 11

## Group Opinions Essay Outline

### Directions:

- a. Organize into groups of 3–5 students.
- b. Choose one of the questions that were asked in the survey in Activity 10.
- c. Your group will be working on creating an opinion essay outline.
- d. As a group, brainstorm and complete this outline.

Group Members:

Question # \_\_\_\_\_

Thesis statement: \_\_\_\_\_

REASON #1

DETAILS/ EXAMPLES

REASON #2

DETAILS/EXAMPLES

REASON #3

DETAILS/EXAMPLES

 ACTIVITY 12

## Group Opinion Essay

### Directions:

Use the outline that you have created above to write an opinion essay. Your essay should include these parts.

1. An introduction (3–5 sentences)
  - write one or two general statements about the topic
  - write a clear thesis statement that expresses an opinion
  - give 3 reasons to support the opinion
2. Three Body Paragraphs (6–10 sentences each)
  - each body paragraph should explain one reason and have specific details and examples to support that reason
  - each body paragraph should have clear paragraph organization
3. A conclusion (3–5 sentences)
  - restate the thesis using different words than in your introduction
  - restate your three reasons in three separate sentences
  - finish the essay with an original, interesting thought about the topic
4. Peer Editing
  - Either as you are writing or after you have finished the assignment, use peer editing to improve content, organization, and writing conventions.

When all groups are finished, your group will present your essay to the class. Your teacher and classmates will provide constructive feedback that will help with future assignments.

 ACTIVITY 13

## Individual Opinion Essay

In your opinion, which of these themes is the most important theme of the story?

1. Complex Decisions in War
2. The Evil of Discrimination
3. Love and Sacrifice
4. The Strength of Friendship
5. Surviving Hardship

### Directions:

- a. Choose one of the themes listed above. If you can think of a different theme, get your teacher's permission before doing the assignment.
- b. The first important step is to write a clear thesis statement.
- c. Complete an opinion essay outline similar to what you did in Activity 11.
- d. Make sure that your outline also includes clear reasons, as well as specific supporting details and examples from the story.
- e. Your essay will be formally evaluated for content, organization, and writing style using a rubric provided by your teacher.



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PART C

Extension Activities

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## ACTIVITY 14

# Guided Viewing: The Opera *Brundibar*

*Brundibar* was the opera composed and performed in Terezin Concentration Camp and described from the point of view of Eva in the novel. Various versions of the opera are easily found on YouTube, including a black-and-white propaganda film produced by the Nazis. Tell the students that after viewing a portion of the film you will introduce topics for discussion.

These are the questions:

1. How many children are in the performance?
2. What are the age ranges of the children in the performance?
3. Are the children performing well? Why was performing well important to them?
4. Look at the faces and body language of the children? What feelings are the children communicating? Why would they have these feelings?
5. If you were one of the children in Terezin, would you have participated in the performance or would you have refused? Give reasons for your decision.
6. What is a good definition of propaganda? How and why could the film of *Brundibar* be used as propaganda?
7. What feelings do you have watching the film?



## ACTIVITY 15

### Guided Viewing: *Saving Private Ryan*

*Saving Private Ryan is an Academy Award-winning film that deals with the complexity of war. Have the students view the long opening scene, which is a graphic description of the invasion of Normandy Beach. Ask these questions for guided viewing and discussion.*

1. Where do these opening scenes take place? What can you tell from the physical surroundings?
2. What is the advancing army trying to do? What is their mission?
3. What are the perils of war depicted in this scene?
4. How would soldiers possibly survive this experience?
5. How do these opening scenes clearly depict the horrors of war?
6. What are some of the techniques used by the filmmaker to involve the audience in the story?
7. What are your feelings about what you just watched? Give some reasons for these feelings.



## ACTIVITY 16

### Movie Review

*This activity can be used as media literacy or as the Culminating Performance Task in a credit course. The movies that follow all have war themes. Be advised that most of them have graphic depictions of war. To differentiate instruction, students can be given the option to do the assignment as an oral presentation.*

 **ACTIVITY 16**

## Movie Review

Here is a list of movies that are about war. They are easily available online or as DVDs.

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. War Horse                      |   |
| 2. All Quiet on the Western Front | 1–4 are set in World War I              |
| 3. The Red Badge of Courage       | 5–8 are set in World War II             |
| 4. The Lost Battalion             | 9–10 are set in the Vietnam War         |
| 5. Saving Private Ryan            | 11–12 are set in the war in Afghanistan |
| 6. Schindler’s List               |   |
| 7. Letters from Iwo Jima          |   |
| 8. The Big Red One                |   |
| 9. Apocalypse Now                 |   |
| 10. Platoon                       |   |
| 11. American Sniper               |   |
| 12. The Hurt Locker               |   |

### Directions:

Choose one of these movies, watch it, then write a movie review about it. Follow this format.

### Paragraph 1: Plot Summary (8–10 sentences)

Write a short plot summary of the movie. Focus on the main events of the story. However, be careful not to give away the ending of the story. End your plot summary just at the climax of the story.

### Paragraph 2: Character Study of Protagonist (8–10 sentences)

Write a short physical description of the protagonist. Then, choose three of the character’s most obvious personal qualities. For each personal quality that you identify, give specific details and

examples of when the character demonstrates that quality. Finally, identify how the character changes or develops from the beginning to the end of the film.

### **Paragraph 3: Theme or Themes (8–10 sentences)**

Identify one or two major themes of the story. For each theme that you identify, give specific examples or details from the film that display that theme.

### **Paragraph 4: Moviemaking Techniques (8–10 sentences)**

Write about techniques used in the movie that keep you interested in watching it. For example, you could talk about the use of music, use of sound effects, camera techniques, or actors' performances that captured your attention.

### **Paragraph 5: Personal Recommendation or Critique (8–10 sentences)**

Write about whether you would recommend this movie to someone your age. Your recommendation can be enthusiastic or mixed. For example, you could like some aspects of the film, but be critical of others. When you give your recommendation, comment on actor's performances, the plot, symbolism, conflicts and the theme of the story.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR OF THIS GUIDE

Helen Wolfe has been an educator for almost 40 years. She has a Bachelor of Arts and a Bachelor of Education and has earned professional certification in Senior English, ESL, Law, Special Education, and a Guidance Specialist.

Helen is experienced in all grade levels from Kindergarten to Grade 12. She has taught in a wide variety of public and private school settings. Since 1988, her focus has been as an adult educator in secondary school credit programs. During that time, she has written, revised, and implemented many courses of study in English, Social Science, and English as a Second Language.

In 2011, she wrote *Terrific Women Teachers*, a non-fiction chapter book for young readers that is part of the Women's Hall of Fame Series from Second Story Press. Her belief is that every student, even those with language and other learning challenges, has the right to read and appreciate well-written children's literature. That philosophy of inclusion motivates her to write teacher's guides to help make quality literature accessible to all learners.

Helen lives in Toronto and continues to work in adult education and ESL.

## QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about this guide or would like to get in touch with Helen Wolfe, please send an e-mail to [info@secondstorypress.ca](mailto:info@secondstorypress.ca).

## FEEDBACK

Let us know about your experience using this guide by completing a short online survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CQHKZG5>