Lesson Plans and Resources for *Children of War*

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These resources are all available, both separately and together, at www.freelibrary.org/onebook

Please send any comments or feedback about these resources to Larissa.Pahomov@gmail.com.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The materials in this unit plan are meant to be flexible and easy to adapt to your own classroom. However, for students reading the entire book, there are several themes that connect the stories. Students should be introduced to one or more of the following key questions as they begin reading, and keep them in mind as they work through the book:

What rights do all people deserve?

What are the effects of war on children?

How can we empathize with people halfway around the world?

Many of the reader response questions and suggested projects relate to these essential questions. Students are encouraged to ask these questions not only of the characters of the book, but of themselves.

ADDITIONAL LESSON PLANS

Voices of Iraqi Refugees
This curriculum includes lessons for three age groups: K-4, 5-8, and 9-12. The lesson plans are designed to introduce students to the Iraqi refugee crisis.

Discovery Education Unit for “Children of War”
A two-week unit with day-by-day instructions and a focus on world history, sociology, psychology, and media literacy.
http://school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/activities/childrenofwar/

Examining War through a Child’s Perspective
A detailed, thorough unit published by the Yale National Initiative. Includes detailed activities such as dialogue journals and an anticipation guide, as well as suggestions for companion texts and thematic connections.
http://teachers.yale.edu/curriculum/viewer/initiative_06.03.04_u

Center for Middle Eastern Studies – Middle School Lesson Plans
A massive anthology of many different lessons relating to all sections of the middle east. Focus on both language arts and social studies.
http://cmes.arizona.edu/node/638#%286-8%29
IN-CLASS INTRODUCTION
This lesson is designed to provide students with a one-class introduction to the book. The lesson can be used to start off a class reading of the text, or to encourage them to read it independently.

As a recipient of One Book resources, the Free Library requires that you devote one class period to introducing Children of War to students, either using this lesson or your own plan.

Introduction

1. Have students document the stories of their own childhoods, either by typing up their answers to the following prompts or by filling out the attached worksheet
   - What good memories do you have from your childhood?
   - Have you ever had to move? Why? How did you adjust to your new environment?
   - What is the scariest experience you have ever had?
   - What do you hope for in the future? (Either for yourself, or the whole world.)

2. If they are comfortable doing so, students can read their stories out to a partner, or trade papers and read silently.

3. Hand out copies of “Children of War.” Ask students what they know about Iraq. Collect these ideas on the board.

4. Have students look at the map on page 16, and then read the introduction either out loud or individually. Discuss: what new information do they have? Did anything surprise them?

5. Have students read one of the interviews. This can be achieved in a number of ways.
   - Aloud, all together
   - Individually, with everybody reading the same chapter
   - Individually, with partners or groups of four choosing from Hibba, R., Michael, and Sara.

   As they read, have students fill out the flip side of their chart (if they are using them), or just keep the opening prompts in mind.

6. After reading is finished, discuss:
   - What things in common did students have with the Iraqi refugees? What differences did they notice?
   - Could they empathize with the children at all? Why or why not?
   - What did the children and their families think of the United States? Was this surprising? Why or why not?
   - If they could speak to these children in person, what would they say?
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<tr>
<th>History of My Childhood</th>
<th>Your Name: __________________________________</th>
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<td>What good memories do you have from your childhood?</td>
<td>Have you ever had to move? Why? How did you</td>
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<td>adjust to your new environment?</td>
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<td>What is the scariest experience you have ever had?</td>
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<td>for yourself, or the whole world.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>History of an Iraqi Refugee</td>
<td>Their Name: ________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>What good memories do they have from their childhood? (What do they miss?)</td>
<td>Why did their family decide to move? How did they adjust their new environment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What was the scariest experience they described?</td>
<td>What do they hope for in the future? (Either for themselves, or the whole world.)</td>
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# Ideas and Messages to America

In this literary log, it is your job to record any messages that the Iraqi children have for the American people and government. Then analyze – based on their experiences, why did they have this opinion?

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<th>What was their opinion of America?</th>
<th>Why did they feel this way? What experiences influenced their ideas?</th>
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SUGGESTED ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENTS

1. Write a review of “Children of War.” Describe what readers will gain from reading the book (without giving away too many of the details.)

2. Write an opinion essay on what you think should be one for children who are war refugees. Quote at least three interviews from the book to back up your argument.

3. Research the history and culture of Iraq and present to the class. (This project could also be done as a class, with each student or group taking on a different topic or historical era.)
SUGGESTED CREATIVE ASSESSMENTS

1. Write a personal essay based on the four questions that you answered at the beginning of the unit. Make sure you also include a statement to Iraqi children: what do you want to tell them, and what should they know about Americans?

2. All proceeds from the sale of “Children of War” are being donated to the Children In Crisis fund of IBBY, the International Board on Books for Young People (www.ibby.org). Create a fundraising campaign to encourage people to donate to this program. Why should people help children of war? (If possible, run this campaign in your school to help refugees around the world.)

1. In the interview with Abinminak, Deborah Ellis writes that “Iraq has a rich history of artists, poets, and musicians” (66). Can you find inspiration for your own work from the creations of Iraqi Refugees?


ONLINE RESOURCES

Note: Many additional resources, including international aide groups, are listed in the back of the book.

VIDEO

Biography of Deborah Ellis
4-minute video featuring video footage of the author of the book and pictures of the different subjects she has written about.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PIsw9DMExF4&t=26

LITERATURE

Deborah Ellis – Get Involved
The section of Deborah Ellis’ website which provides links for students to get more information and make a positive impact in the lives of different disenfranchised groups around the world.
http://deborahellis.com/get-involved/

CURRENT EVENTS

NYTimes Archive: Iraq
http://topics.nytimes.com/top/news/international/countriesandterritories/iraq/
This page collects the wealth of articles and multimedia that the New York Times has published. A great start point for student research.

NYTimes: Iraq Five Years In
http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2008/03/18/world/middleeast/20080319 IRAQWAR_TIMELINE.html?#tab1
A more focused timeline / slideshow that introduces viewers to the major events from each year, complete with photos and links to articles.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Big Picture Blog: Scenes from Iraq
28 large photographs showing both US soldiers and Iraqi citizens.

Scenes from Baghdad
"Video, photos and written reports" from different moments of daily life for Iraqi citizens -- weddings, parks, shops, etc.

Faces of the Dead
An interactive feature with basic information and a photograph for each American serviceman or woman killed in Iraq.
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