



Global Voices Information Sheet

The Power of Silence



A soldier marks Remembrance Day with a wreath

Background Info

- Remembrance Day is a memorial day first dedicated to the fallen soldiers of World War I, but has since evolved into a day that honours the men and women who still serve in the military overseas, in Afghanistan and all over the world.
- November 11 marks the official end of World War I on that date in 1918. The war ended on the eleventh hour of the eleventh day of the eleventh month: at 11am. This is why we observe a minute of silence at this time on Remembrance Day.
- The article suggests that on Remembrance Day, we should also remember child soldiers.
- Child soldiers fight against their will, are often kidnapped, drugged, forced to kill their families or friends and brainwashed into a life of violence. This most often occurs in developing countries, like Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which are both in Africa.
- Vow of Silence is a fundraising and awareness raising campaign held by people around the world on November 30 every year.
- Vow participants choose to stay silent (this can simply mean no talking, or the participant can choose not to use any social media) to raise money for a charity or cause of their choice.
- Without basic human rights, like food, water and access to education, children are “silenced,” meaning they are not active members of society and cannot speak up for themselves.
- When people in wealthier countries, like Canada, give up their voice, it is a symbolic gesture in solidarity with those who cannot speak up for their rights.

Key terms

- **Immortalized**—to make immortal (never dying or lasting forever) and forever famous or recognizable.
- **Solidarity**—unity of agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals in a group with common interests.

Global Voices Elementary Educator Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections

- Themes: war, history, children's rights, child soldiers, Remembrance Day.
- Course Connections: The Arts, Language, Social Studies.

Materials

- Chart paper or blackboard
- Projector and screen
- Internet
- Global Voices column

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Reading Comprehension

1. Guided Reading: The Global Voices Column (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Have students sit in a circle and distribute one copy of the Global Voices column to each student.
 - b. Pre-reading steps:
 - i. Make predictions: ask students to read the title of the column and view the pictures. After doing so, ask them to make predictions as to what the column is going to be about.
 - ii. Introduce vocabulary from the column.
 - iii. Assess prior knowledge: ask students to discuss what they already know about these topics.
 - c. Reading steps:

- i. Go around the circle and have each student read a section of the column to the class, so that everyone gets a turn to read.
 - ii. As students are reading, offer guidance and coaching by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
- d. Post reading steps:
- i. Encourage students to provide a summary of the column in order to ensure they have understood the series of events.
 - ii. Ask questions about the text to judge comprehension.

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Discussing the Global Voices Column (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. Ask students the following suggested questions about the column, encourage them to use evidence from the Global Voices column to support their answers:
 - i. What is the message in this column?
 - ii. What perspectives are presented in this column? Which ones are left out?
 - iii. What problem is presented in this column?
 - iv. What events are discussed in this column?
 - v. What is the purpose of Remembrance Day?
 - vi. What is a veteran?
 - vii. What is a soldier?
 - viii. What is a child soldier?

Thinking

1. Michel's Story (estimated time: 30 minutes)
 - a. In the Global Voices column you met Michel Chikwanine, a former child soldier and children's rights advocate. Ask students to explain what they have learned about Michel.
 - b. Share his story again with the class by showing the following video:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8NPxYItMpbk>
 - c. After watching the video, ask students to write an acrostic poem about Michel using the words Child Labour.
 - d. When acrostics are completed, ask students to create a good copy of their poem and decorate it using colours and pictures.
 - e. Students will hand in completed acrostics for grading.

Communication

1. Remembrance Interview (estimated time: take home project)
 - a. With Remembrance Day having just passed, encourage your students to do some research into their family history.
 - b. Ask students if they know of any family or community members who fought in a war and explain what they know about that individual.
 - c. Following this discussion explain to students that they are going to do a small project on this person, presenting their story to the class.
 - d. Ask students to think of ways they can learn more about this individual and their experience in the war. This can be through a direct interview, interviewing another family member, searching through old family photo albums, visiting a community center etc. Ask students to explain how they will research their chosen veteran.
 - e. Using their research, students must create a one minute presentation for the class, educating them on this person's experiences.

Application

1. The Vow of Silence (estimated time: continuous project)

- a. Ask students to reflect on all they have learned from this Global Voices lesson. Explain to them that it is easy to feel helpless when learning about issues such as children soldiers and children's rights because it is difficult to determine how you can help.
- b. Inform students that there is a tangible way that they can stand in solidarity with their peers around the world who have not been granted their rights through a campaign introduced in the column: The Vow of Silence.
- c. Introduce the campaign by viewing the following video:
 - i. An introduction to the campaign by Free The Children
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uraOhuNQ5hM&feature=player_embedded and
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wt0YlunaO6s>
- d. Distribute the Vow of Silence How-To Guide and ask students to review the guide quietly together.
 - i. Vow of Silence How-To Guide -
http://www.freethechildren.com/vowofsilence/doc/Vow%20of%20Silence-HowtoGuide_Sept25.pdf
- e. Discuss the logistics of the campaign by asking the following suggested questions:
 - i. What does it mean to take the Vow on November 30?
 - ii. What are the steps you can take to participate in this campaign?
 - iii. What are the goals of the campaign?
 - iv. Why is this campaign important?
 - v. What steps need to be taken to participate in this campaign?
 - vi. What are some ways we can show that we're silent?
 - vii. How can we spread the silence?
 - viii. How can we make it count and receive the best fundraising results for this campaign?
 - ix. How can we break the silence when the campaign is over?
- f. Sign your group up for the campaign by filling out the registration form at www.freethechildren.com/vowofsilence and begin your planning!

Additional Resources

In addition to the above lesson plans, you may want to share some additional resources with your students. Listed below are some links to useful online resources:

Free The Children – www.freethechildren.com

We Day Teach - <http://www.weday.com/teach>

Vow of Silence campaign – www.freethechildren.com/vowofsilence