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Examining War through a Child's Perspective

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In the past few decades civilian casualties in wars have increased. Half of those casualties are children. It is important for high school students to understand that over 2 million kids have died from wars; that over 8,000 of them are killed by landmines each year; that those who aren't killed, but are directly affected, are either severely wounded, recruited as child soldiers, raped, and/or orphaned (UNICEF). Rather than wait for my students to learn half-truths about the damage war can do to civilians, in particular children, I want to expose them to this topic by way of children's literature.

By exposing my students to these experiences via children's fiction and nonfiction literature, I hope that they will achieve a broader view of the world. I expect that my students will develop sympathy for the plight of others as they learn about the horrors some children face. Along the way, I intend to teach my students to develop a critical eye for texts; improving their ability to make decisions about the validity and purpose of literature.

(Developed for Language Arts, grade 9; recommended for Language Arts, grade 9)

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