

A Long Way Gone

1. Question & Research Task

The memoir *A Long Way Gone* is based on the personal account of a child soldier during the Civil War in Sierra Leone.

Brutal and bloody, Sierra Leone's Civil War raged for more than a decade, from 1991 to 2002, with few clear goals. The conflict hurt not only its civilians, but most notably, its children.

Throughout this Slam Dunk, you will analyze various resources in order to determine how this Civil War affected Sierra Leone's most vulnerable and impressionable young citizens, in order to gain insight into Ishmael Beah's account of his personal experience.

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Your teacher/librarian might play this video of a former child soldier recounting his experience in Sierra Leone.

Image Source: YouTube

How were the children of Sierra Leone affected by its Civil War?

2. Information Sources

Read each of the information sources linked here to complete the Student Activity on Slide 3.

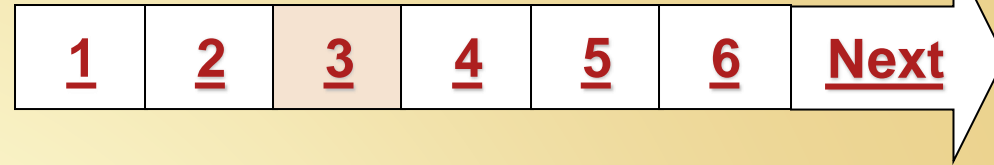
- [Children Recruited by Armed Forces or Armed Groups](#)
- [Savagery Dresses Up as Revolution Since 1991](#)
- [RUF Forcefully Recruits Child Soldiers](#)
- [Reading, Writing and Warfare: Children in Armed Conflict](#)



Map of Sierra Leone.

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

3. Student Activity



Use the information sources on Slide 2 to complete the **Inquiry Chart**.

For each resource, you will analyze these important topics:

Connection to Civil War

- a) Causes
- b) Influences
- c) Affects

Atrocities Committed by:

- a) Government
- b) Armies
- c) Citizens

Child Soldiers

- a) Involvement
- b) Recruitment
- c) Coercion
- d) Testimony
- e) Abuse

Other Interesting Facts (at least 2)

A Long Way Gone: Slam Dunk Resource 1

Inquiry Chart

Resource	Connection to Sierra Leone Civil War	Atrocities	Child Soldiers	Other Interesting Facts
10 Facts				
Savagery				
RUF				
Sierra Leone				

Adapted from ReadWriteThink for Baltimore County Public Schools Library Media Programs July 2022

The Inquiry Chart for the assignment.

Image Source: Adapted from ReadWriteThink

4. Assessment Activity

How were the children of Sierra Leone affected by its Civil War?

Ishmael Beah was about 13 years old when he was recruited to be a child soldier during the civil war in Sierra Leone. Write a brief journal entry from the perspective of a child like Ishmael who may have witnessed or experienced Sierra Leone's war. Be sure to include specific details and facts from your research and notes.

Follow this [rubric](#) to ensure you have included every element. Alternatively, your teacher may choose to use the PARCC rubric.



A child soldier in Liberia hides behind a bush with a gun in his hands.

Image Source: United States Army Africa, Wikimedia Commons

5. Enrichment Activities



School destroyed by Sierra Leone Civil War.

Image Source: Wikimedia Commons

Additional Resources & Learning:

- [The Armed Conflict in Sierra Leone](#)
- [The Sierra Leone Civil War](#)
- [Child Soldiers International Report 2018](#)
- [Former Child Soldier Writes Graphic Novel](#)

Extension Activity:

Predict how your own fictional account of a child's experience in Sierra Leone will compare to Ishmael Beah's recollections from his memoir. Compare Michel Chikwanine's experience as described in his graphic novel to your own account and to what you imagine Ishmael Beah's memoir will describe.

6. Teacher Resources

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Learning Standards Alignment

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy

Reading: 1. Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Writing: 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Writing 3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

AASL Standards Framework for Learners Inquire: Build new knowledge by inquiring, thinking critically, identifying problems, and developing strategies for solving problems.

Think: Learners display curiosity and initiative by:

I.A.2 Recalling prior and background knowledge as context for new meaning.

Create: Learners engage with new knowledge by following a process that includes:

I.B.1 Using evidence to investigate questions. I.B.3 Generating products that illustrate learning.

Share: Learners adapt, communicate, and exchange learning products with others in a cycle that includes:

I.C.1 Interacting with content presented by others.

Grow: Learners participate in an ongoing inquiry-based process by:

I.D.2 Engaging in sustained inquiry.

Grade 10 English: Unit 3

Objective: Students will analyze information from multiple sources in order to synthesize their research into a fictional account.

Time Frame: 1 90-minute class period

Differentiation strategies for this lesson:

- Have students use learning supports provided in BCPS Digital Content found in the [AppsPortal](#). Refer to [Digital Content Snapshot/Support pages](#) as needed.

Notes to the teacher:

- Collaborate with your school library media specialist to plan and implement this lesson.
- Provide students with login information as needed to authenticate BCPS Digital Content. Login information is on the **BCPS Digital Content** page in the [Apps Portal](#).
- Consider using the [Schoology Assignment App](#) feature to assign Google Docs for students to access, edit, and submit through Schoology.