

Summer Reading Assignment for 10th Grade

The summer reading assignment for rising 10th graders will consist of two parts. The first part will be watch the movie “Blood Diamond”. **PLEASE WATCH THE MOVIE FIRST.** The viewing of this film will help to provide background and context for the reading of the memoir, *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah. While watching “Blood Diamond”, students must complete the study guide questions. These study guide questions for the movie as well as the reading journal for *A Long Way Gone* will be **due during the second week of school.** There will also be a test on *A Long Way Gone* **during the third week of school.**

Blood Diamond is currently (as of June 2019) available on Netflix and other streaming services.

Blood Diamond Study Guide

Director’s Introduction

Edward Zwick, 2006

When I first read about Sierra Leone, I was shocked. I’d read books about the colonial “scramble for Africa,” about the exploitation of its ivory, rubber and gold, but to learn the history of diamonds was to learn the story of Africa all over again.

In certain ways the movie we’ve made is very conventional, an action drama about three people whose lives are forever changed by the discovery of a single rough stone. But because the story takes place in such a charged political context it is also an opportunity to evoke the kind of provocative images and complex issues seldom treated in Hollywood films. It’s always been my belief that entertainment and ideas need not be mutually exclusive, and that political awareness can be raised as much by narrative as by rhetoric.

If a single piece of work was capable of bringing about immediate change, then so many well intentioned films over the years would have long ago solved the world’s problems. But raising consciousness is a distance event, not a sprint. It’s important to remember that 150 years ago in this country it was entirely acceptable for a man to own another man. Twenty years ago people thought nothing of drinking and driving. Five years ago you could smoke in restaurants and on airplanes. These are remarkable paradigm shifts, but they only came about by a number of people willing to hold up a mirror, unflattering at times, in order to show the world to itself. As a filmmaker, all I can do is to add my voice to the chorus. Eventually the aggregate effect of movies, songs, documentaries, and editorials are compounded until it reaches a kind of tipping point. And change happens.

The United States purchases about nine billion dollars’ worth of diamonds every year, more than two-thirds of the world's sales. If its consumers insist that each stone be accompanied by a verifiable warranty, it’s going to have a very powerful effect. This is one of those rare situations in which an individual can become pro-active by virtue of nothing more than educating himself. We simply have to take responsibility for our consumerism.

I have nothing against diamonds (or rubies or emeralds or sapphires). Gems are beautiful and desirable. To buy or not to buy is an individual decision. But it has to be an informed decision. I do object when their acquisition is complicit in the debasement of children, or the destruction of a country. I find it unconscionable that the resources of the third world be exploited for the sake of our vanity, and above all that billions of dollars of corporate profit are built on the backs of workers paid a dollar a day. The story of Sierra Leone is not unique. My hope is that in telling a story like this, it might help prevent it from happening again.

Characters

- § Danny Archer (South African mercenary) – Leonardo DiCaprio
- § Maddy Bowen (U.S. journalist) - Jennifer Connelly
- § Solomon Vandy (Mende fisherman) – Djimon Hounsou
- § Dia Vandy (Solomon’s Son) – Kagiso Kuypers
- § Jassie (Solomon’s Wife) – Benu Mabhena
- § Benjamin (School Teacher) – Basil Wallace
- § Captain Poison (RUF commander) – Davie Harewood
- § Cordell Brown (Ransacked Archer’s apartment) – Antony Coleman
- § The Colonel (Archer’s mercenary boss) – Arnold Vosloo
- § Ambassador Walker – Stephen Collins
- § Van de Kaap (Head of diamond company) – Marius Weyer

Study Guide Questions

Directions: Within complete sentences, answer each of the following questions with relevant support and detailed explanation. **Complete on a separate sheet of paper.**

1. The film begins and ends in Antwerp, Belgium. How do the events in Belgium relate to events in Sierra Leone?
2. Why did Danny Archer become involved in the conflict diamond trade?
3. What tactics does the RUF use to turn children into soldiers?
4. Explain how Captain Poison is a product of his environment as well as a product of his choices?
5. Explain the evolution of Danny’s and Solomon’s relationship.

6. For each character in the film, diamonds represent a different idea. Explain what the diamonds represent to each of the main characters?
7. All of the characters are changed by events of this story. Explain how each main character responds to the conflict around him or her?
8. Though the film focuses on the devastation of war, it also deals with reconciliation, rehabilitation, and hope. What are some specific scenes that deal with these topics?
9. What human rights issues are illustrated in the film?
10. What international laws are in place to stop or prevent the atrocities of war and violation of human rights?

Summer Reading Assignment
***A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah**

Reading Journal Directions:

After each major section in the text, your task will be to complete a reading journal. You will need to examine the presence of a motif and theme or a symbol, provide an example of a literary device (simile, metaphor, personification etc), write a 5 sentence summary, and complete different tasks that encourage you to relate to the book. Themes and motifs will be repeated in the reading journals. Be sure to find different evidence of those themes and motifs in each section. **You will also take a test during the first few weeks of school to show your knowledge of the reading.**

Feel free to write your answers on a separate sheet of paper if you do not have enough room.

The themes that you are looking for include:

*Remember that a theme is the overall message that the author is trying to get across in his or her writing.

- The loss of innocence
- Survival/will to live
- Importance of storytelling
- Family
- Loss/Grief

- Violence/Murder/Pain
- Revenge/Anger
- Hope
- Love
- Trust
- Manipulation
- Courage
- Forgiveness

Motifs: (Motifs are images, ideas, sounds, or words that help to explain the central idea of a literary work – the theme.)

Symbols: (Remember a symbol is something that stands for a larger concept such as love, peace, hate etc.)

- Shoes
- The moon
- Shakespeare
- Food
- Music

Some possible literary devices that you can examine: (This is a short list to get you started. You can examine other literary devices if you like.)

personification	Giving human qualities to something that is not human
flashback	Depicting events that have happened in the past before the current time of the story
foreshadowing	A hint at what is to come in the story
imagery	Use of language that creates an image in your mind; appeals to all five of the reader's senses
Metaphor	A direct comparison between two unlike things
Simile	A comparison between two unlike things that uses like or as

Section 1: Chapters 1-8

Motif:	How it is shown (paraphrase/quote)? How does this motif contribute the the theme?	Page #
Theme:	How it is shown (paraphrase/quote):	Page #
Describe Ishmael's attitude at a certain point:	Copy the quote that shows this attitude.	Page #
Literary Device:	Quote:	Page #

Now write a sentence of your own using the same type of literary device above:

Predict what you think will happen next.

Section 2: Chapters 9-11

Symbol: (Choose a symbol from this section.)	How it is shown (paraphrase/quote):	Page #
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Write two adjectives that describe how this section made you feel. Then explain why for each.

Adjective 1: _____

Why:

Adjective 2: _____

Why:

Literary Device:	Quote:	Page #
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Now write a sentence of your own using the same type of literary device above:

Section 3: Chapters 12-18

Motif:	How it is shown (paraphrase/quote)? How does this motif contribute the the theme?	Page #
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Theme:	How it is shown (paraphrase/quote):	Page #
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Literary Device:	Quote:	Page #
Now write a sentence of your own using the same type of literary device above:		

Section 4: Chapters 19-21

Symbol:	How it is shown (paraphrase/quote):	Page #
Literary Device:	Quote:	Page #
Now write a sentence of your own using the same type of literary device above:		
In five sentences, summarize what happened in this section:		
Find a word in this section that you are unfamiliar with. Write down the word, its definition, and a sentence of your own using it.		