



## CHILD SOLDIERS

<b>Time</b>	45–60 minutes
<b>Level</b>	intermediate
<b>Skills</b>	speaking, reading
<b>Knowledge goal</b>	raising awareness of child soldiers
<b>Materials</b>	Ss' worksheet: p. S1 – one copy per student p. S2 – Reading activity – text A, B, C (one set per group)

### 1 Lead-in

- Tell the class that they are going to do some work on soldiers. In small groups Ss make a list of ten words they associate with the word “soldier”. Write their words on one side of the board.
- Then tell them that you are going to talk about a special type of soldier today. Ask them to look either at the photos or at the short video. More instructions are below at the end of these teachers' notes\*. Then revise the list of their associations on the board. What would they add to it?
- Invite the Ss to think of Qs which occurred to them while watching the video or looking at the pictures. Then in small groups, they write down a list of questions on this issue. The activity can be turned into a competition – e.g. Which group can think of the most Qs about the issue in 2 minutes?
- Then Ss read their Qs aloud and each pair writes one or two on the board. Ask Ss to avoid repetition. Correct the wording of their Qs as necessary. The Qs will be used later.

**Note:** If Ss are unable to think of many questions, add your own Qs. Here are some suggestions:

*Why are children used as soldiers?*

*Can they make good fighters?*

*How do they become soldiers?*

*Where are their families?*

*What are their tasks in the army?*

*How does it affect them?*

*What happens to them after the conflict ends or if they manage to run away?*

- The Ss suggest possible answers as a class or in small groups.
- Make sure Ss realize that the term “child soldier” doesn't refer only to children who go into combat. There is more information in the Infobox at the end of the teachers' notes.

### 2 Main activity

- Tell Ss they are going to read more information on the issue of child soldiers. First ask them to match the key words and phrases, which you'll dictate, with their pronunciation patterns. Write these patterns on the board and ask them to copy them:

0, 0o , o0, 0oo, o0o, oo0, o0oo

Then dictate the words and phrases. Ss choose the correct pattern for each. Provide the spelling by writing them on the board:

*weapon* (n) 0o, *recruit* (v) o0, *combat zone* 0oo, *refugee* (n) oo0, *by force* (adv) o0, *abducted* (v) o0o, *spy* (n) 0, *consequence* (n) 0oo, *commit a crime* o0o0, *recovery* (n) o0oo

- Distribute the worksheet from p. S1. Ask Ss to follow the instructions. Then check as a class.
- Divide the Ss into groups of threes and give each person in the group one part of the text (A, B and C) – p. S2. If the number of Ss doesn't permit this, a pair of Ss can share one text.
- After they have finished reading, Ss tell each other within their groups what they have learnt. Then they go back to the Qs written on the board and decide if their predictions were correct.

### 3 Follow-up – optional

- Making posters. Ask Ss in small groups to draw an outline of a tree including roots, branches and fruit. Ask them to write “child soldiers” on the trunk. Then Ss write in the:
  - roots: the reasons child soldiers exist
  - branches: the effects of the existence of child soldiers
  - fruit: possible solutionsEncourage them to write keywords instead of whole sentences.
- Then display the posters on the wall. Ss can ask other groups some additional questions.

#### 4 Follow-up – Discussion

Discuss the issue with the Ss:

*Imagine yourself in a child soldier's shoes. What do you think you would find the most disturbing?*

*How can child soldiers be rescued from this situation?*

*What do you think their chances are for a normal life once they are back? What difficulties do former child soldiers face? How can child soldiers be rescued from this situation?*

*Do you think that children could ever be recruited as soldiers in your country?*

*Do you think that the recruitment of child soldiers in other countries could be prevented or stopped? If so, how?*

#### 5 Ideas for Homework

A. Ss find out more about an ex-child soldier, Ishmael Beah. You can find more info at [www.globalissues.eu](http://www.globalissues.eu) (additional materials).

B. **Acrostic poems.** Ss make acrostic poems about child soldiers. This is a poem in which particular letters in each line, usually the first letters, can be read downwards to form a word or phrase. The words that go downwards can be the names of countries where child soldiers can be found. The lines can be several words or just single words. In the following lesson Ss can display their poems on a large sheet of paper and make a poster.

Example:

*Children on the run*

*Hungry, helpless and hopeful*

*Army gave them a bite and a gun*

*Dragged them to war and destroyed them*

**List of countries:**

[http://hrw.org/children/child\\_soldiers\\_map.html](http://hrw.org/children/child_soldiers_map.html)

#### \*Visual input for Lead-in:

Choose a video or photos on this topic. Look at [www.globalissues.eu](http://www.globalissues.eu) or consider these suggestions:

**A.** Use any YouTube video on the topic "child soldiers" for a classroom online with data projector. Choose a video with little factual information.

E.g. "Child soldiers":

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WKWZvuQlq70> – 1'44"

"Stolen childhood":

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4j3HhVNI9Q> – 5'54"

**B.** Use the photos of child soldiers at [www.globalissues.eu](http://www.globalissues.eu).

#### INFOBOX – CHILD SOLDIERS

Any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not only refer to a child who carries arms.

##### More info:

Human Rights Watch –

<http://hrw.org/campaigns/crp/index.htm>

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers –

<http://www.child-soldiers.org>

[www.invisiblechildren.com](http://www.invisiblechildren.com)

#### KEY

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1. combat zone, 2. commits a crime, 3. refugee, 4. weapon, 5. recovery, 6. recruit, 7. consequences, 8. abducted, 9. spy, 10. by force



**Complete these definitions with one of these words or phrases:**

weapon                  recruit                  combat zone  
 refugee    by force                  abducted                  spy  
 consequence                  commit a crime                  recovery

1. A \_\_\_\_\_ is the place where a battle takes place during a war.
2. If someone \_\_\_\_\_, they do something that is against the law.
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a person who has been forced to leave their home or country because of war or because of their religious or political beliefs.
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ is an object such as a gun, a knife, or a missile which is used to kill or hurt people in a fight or a war.
5. When a person makes a \_\_\_\_\_, they get back their previous health or better situation.
6. If you \_\_\_\_\_ people for an organisation, you select them and persuade them to join it or work for it.
7. The \_\_\_\_\_ of something are the results or effects of it. They are usually bad.
8. If someone is \_\_\_\_\_, they are taken away illegally, usually using force.
9. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a person whose job it is to find out secret information about another country or organisation.
10. If something is done to someone \_\_\_\_\_, someone has to do something that they don't want to do.

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weapon                  recruit                  combat zone  
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## READINGS:



### Child soldiers – part A

#### Present situation

Children across Europe and North America play video games such as "God of War", but some children in other parts of the world play real war games.

Across Asia, Africa and Latin America, children, sometimes only 8 years old, become child soldiers. They don't go to school. Instead of textbooks, they carry AK-47s. Modern weapons are very light and easy to carry. Instructors teach them how to shoot to kill. No maths or literature. They have no childhood and often experience horrible violence. About 200,000 to 300,000 children are today serving as soldiers for both rebel groups and government forces in over twenty countries around the world.

#### Why children?

Children are often recruited because they are less demanding than adults. They are cheaper because they eat less. It is also easier to manipulate them. Drugs are sometimes used to give the children more courage.

#### Legal or illegal?

The international law prohibits child soldiers. Soldiers must be more than 18 years old.

### Child soldiers – part B

#### Recruitment

Child soldiers usually come from poor families which live in a combat zone. Or they are often refugees or orphans. These children are in the greatest danger of recruitment. Some children want to become soldiers because they believe they will get food or security. But many children are recruited by force.

#### Life in the army

Child soldiers do not always fight. They serve as porters or cooks, guards, messengers or spies. When they go into combat, they are often in the front lines or sent into minefields first.

#### Girls

Girls are also child soldiers. They are often sexually abused and become "wives" of military commanders.

### Child soldiers – part C

#### Consequences

The most frequent injuries are loss of hearing, blindness, and loss of arms or legs. Many girls are at great risk of becoming HIV/AIDS positive.

Children often lose their families and a place where they can return. Although they are children, their families and neighbours often look at them as murderers. They are not welcomed.

When the fighting ends or when the children run away from the army, it is very difficult for them to start normal life again. They see violence as a natural part of life. Many children end up on the street, committing crimes, or even go back into the army.

#### Recovery

Many child soldiers want to go back to a normal life – to get an education and have a normal future. But this is usually not possible in their poor countries.

Thanks to international organisations, such as the United Nations, many centres for former child soldiers have been founded all over the world. These centres offer health care and protection.

