

UNIT DESCRIPTION: RESEARCH-BASED ARGUMENT ESSAY

Calendar: February 29, 2012 – March 19, 2012

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS:

W.8.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
W.8.1b	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
W.8.1c	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
W.8.1d	Establish and maintain a formal style.
W.8.1e	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

GLOBAL COMPETENCE:

Investigate the World	Students will learn about child soldiers around the world and investigate how the United States participates in this issue.
Recognize Perspectives	Students will research firsthand accounts of child soldiers, aid workers, and in-country community members. Students will identify their own lens/perspective and try to make connections.
Communicate Ideas	Students will work on teams of four and create a series of posters that will be displayed in the hallways of the school. Students will write a research-based argument essay.
Take Action	Students will write letters to the State Department urging our government to fully comply with the Child Soldier Prevention Act and deny military and technical assistance to those who do not meet benchmarks to demilitarize existing child soldiers and prevent the recruitment of new child soldiers. Students will participate in a video chat/visit from the regional director of Amnesty International and learn ways that they can be active citizens.

RATIONALE & SOCIAL/POLITICAL CONTEXT: The ability to effectively communicate through writing will help all of my students throughout their lives. And a substantive understanding of the world is critical to their success as lifelong learners and global citizens.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION (for learners):

How can I study and weigh the sometimes conflicting perspectives on an issue in order to develop an informed stance and to write a well-structured argument essay that convinces readers of my stance, cites the research sources I use, and states and refutes the counter arguments?

GUIDING QUESTIONS (for teachers):



- How can I create a shared experience for students in which they collectively take notes to quickly gather information on a shared topic?
- How can I support writers in analyzing and evaluating different authors' perspectives, examining ideologies across a variety of sources to develop a well-supported stance on an issue?
- How can I support writers in drafting several versions of well-structured argument essays with distinct voice and intention, research that is elaborated on, and information that states and refutes counterclaims?
- How can I support writers in becoming more independent with developing strong research-based arguments, and revising and editing towards publication?

DOMAIN SPECIFIC VOCABULARY:

- Claim
- Slant
- Perspective
- Argument
- Support
- Bias
- Persuasive
- Evaluate
- Analyze
- Compelling
- Paraphrase
- Counterargument
- Statistics

RESOURCES:

- Articles:
 - “Armed and Dangerous” NYT Upfront Magazine
 - “The Perfect Weapon” NYT Upfront Magazine
 - “Rescuing the World’s Girls” O, the Oprah Magazine
 - “Taking the War out of a Child Soldier” NYT Upfront Magazine
 - “Young Conflict Survivors Launch Network for Children Caught in War” UNICEF
 - “Child Soldiers” Mike Wessells
- Videos:
 - World News Network 3-part documentary: “Child Soldiers”
 - TED Talks “Emmanuel Jal”
 - CBS “Ishmael Beah”
 - A Long Way Gone Segments “Ishmael Beah”
- Audio Clips:
 - A Long Way Gone Chapter 1 Audio
 - Destiny’s Child “Soldier”
 - Ben Okafor “No Child Soldiers”
- Statistics:



- Fact Sheet: Gang Violence: Violence Coalition of Greater LA
- Child Soldiers: Vital Statistics UNICEF
- Children in Armed Conflict: UNICEF
- Selected Slides from PPT: Child Soldiers
- Books:
 - “A Long Way Gone” Ishmael Beah (excerpts)
 - “War Child” Emmanuel Jal (excerpts)
 - “Children’s Rights” Courtney Farrell
 - “Child Labor” Global Viewpoints
- Photographs
 - #1—teacher’s choice
 - #2—teacher’s choice

MATERIALS:

- Two sets of directions for each of the centers. One set for day one activities (familiarizing) and another for day two activities (collecting research).
- Chart paper
- A computer for audio center
- A computer for video center
- Resources listed above

TEACHER PREPARATION NOTES: There are lots of materials/resources to gather and create before launching this unit; allow enough time to get organized—especially for Day One and Two as they are Centers. You must have the room set up into 5 different centers for the students to move through: Audio, Video, Photograph, Statistics, and Cross-Text Reference

ASSESSMENT:

Before Unit: Teacher will provide the students with mixed-media research (article, video, audio) on a selected topic. After taking notes on research, students will write a on demand argumentative essay.

- This essay is used as a diagnostic test—what do the students remember about argumentative essays from their 7th grade year?

During Unit: Students will be creating a series of three posters, each demonstrating higher-level thinking/writing. Students will write a Flash Draft of their essay in essay format.

After Unit: Students will edit and revise their essays and include a bibliography for summative assessment.

