Remembrance Day –
Exploring the concepts of War and Peace through Literature

Prep to Year 3
Year 4 to Year 6
Year 7 and 8
Year 9 and 10
Year 11 and 12

Teacher Background
Why do we have Remembrance Day?

On the 11 November 1918, the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the armistice was signed which signalled the end of the hostilities for World War 1, then known as the Great War. From that day on the day, then known as Armistice Day was observed by the Allied Countries as a way of remembering those who died, and in particular, those soldiers with ‘no known grave’.

On the first anniversary of the armistice, in 1919, two minutes’ silence was instituted as part of the main commemorative ceremony.

The Flanders poppy became accepted throughout the allied nations as the flower of remembrance to be worn on Armistice Day. The red poppies were among the first plants that sprouted from the devastation of the battlefields of northern France and Belgium. Soldiers' folklore had it that the poppies were vivid red from having been nurtured in ground drenched with the blood of their comrades.

After the end of World War II in 1945, the Australian and British governments changed the name to Remembrance Day as an appropriate title for a day which would commemorate all war dead.

Each year, we gather at 11am on the 11th day of the 11th month, and pause to reflect, to give honour to the memories of those who have died securing our freedom. The words from Laurence Binyon’s poem are often a part of our commemorations:

For the fallen

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Laurence Binyon (1869–1943)
Why use literature to explore concepts of War and Peace?

Sam Steiner (2008) reminds us that literature has been used throughout history as a teaching tool. Literature provides a shared language and context for discussing issues that may be beyond a child’s current experience, and can help students comprehend abstract or historical concepts, by illustrating them through concrete word and image (Walter, 2007).

While the majority of children in schools today have (thankfully) never personally experienced the horrors of war, it is more than likely that they will have experienced conflict in one form or another. Acknowledging the errors of history, addressing conflict and the strategies used to resolve it and explaining and reinforcing the value of peaceful relations can begin in early childhood education, through the medium of carefully chosen literature. Even the youngest of students will have experienced misunderstandings, jealousy and minor friendship ‘skirmishes’ – and sadly, some of the greatest wars in history have begun just as simply.

As students grow older and become increasingly aware of society and world events, literature can be used as a frame of reference; a springboard for discussion or as stimulus for self expression. Literature that depicts in more detail the impacts of war may not only educate older students about historic events through an engaging channel, but also allows them to develop empathy and understanding of the experiences of others who do not live in peace.

Titles must be chosen with caution. Luke and Myers (1994) highlight the dangers of poorly written books, where good intentions are waylaid through misleading text or unsuitable imagery. Also, the age and level of maturity, as well as recent experiences and current world events must also be taken into account – students must feel safe and unthreatened by the concepts being discussed.

The titles suggested in this resource have been grouped approximately according to age levels, although this will change depending upon how you intend to use the book, the ability of your group and the availability of the titles in your school. Some of the picture books could be used up to and including Years 11 & 12 – particularly Enemy, Memorial and A Prayer for the 21st Century.


Additional Resources

Online resources to assist in the teaching of the concepts of war and peace, conflict resolution and specific resources about Remembrance Day:

- The Australian War Memorial has a range of teaching resources and excellent primary sources for study

- An online guide to teaching resources and interactive learning materials on Remembrance Day

- The Children's Peace Education project is a home and classroom curriculum for young children and is also a library of specially selected books to teach peacemaking with young children between one and six years of age.
  [http://www.childpeacebooks.org/cpb/Protect/ourProject.php](http://www.childpeacebooks.org/cpb/Protect/ourProject.php)


- Teaching for Peace : a project of the Burnaby Teachers Social Justice Committee. The Social Justice Committee seeks to develop classroom friendly materials on social justice and environmental issues. In this project, we have linked a wide range of peace websites as resources according to theme that could be used by educators to nurture a culture of peace and social justice in the classroom. Generally, the themes concern peace as they relate to ending war and global conflict. [http://www.zisman.ca/peace/](http://www.zisman.ca/peace/)

- UNICEF supports all those affected by war, natural disaster and focuses on resolving global issues through peace. Educational resources are available here:
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*These titles have been chosen because of the general themes of war and peace that run through them. Particular historic events have not been the reason for their inclusion, rather the possibilities the content affords for teaching these concepts.*
Early Years: Prep to Year 3

Mem Fox (2006). *Whoever You Are*

**Annotation:**

*Whoever You Are* is best suited to the very young – Prep or Year 1 students. It’s lyrical text focuses on the idea of equality – that despite our differences externally, our life experiences, emotions and humanity unite us - 'Joys are the same, and love is the same. Pain is the same, and blood is the same.' The beautiful illustrations may inspire young artists to create their own interpretation of the text, and the repetition will enhance its read aloud quality. Mem Fox dedicates this book ‘to an undivided Australia’ – it is a wonderful introduction to Peace and international understanding for young children.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- As a group, students discuss and list ways they are similar to others, and ways that they are unique
- Students gather information about their family’s cultural heritage – this may inspire an exploration into different cultures – identify shared aspects (e.g. same basic needs for food, shelter, family) and aspects that differentiate each culture (e.g. types of food, types of family arrangements)
- Students use the illustrations to inspire their own self portraits. These could be displayed with a message from the book, such as ‘smiles are the same all over the world’.

**Additional Resources:**

A unit on social awareness and developing empathy for young students:

Early Years: Prep to Year 3

Mem Fox (1996). *Feathers and Fools*

**Annotation:**

This book depicts sophisticated themes of the futility of war and how conflict can arise through misinformation and fear; however it does so in the form of an animal story, which ends on a note of hope and optimism. The main character groups of the story, the magnificent peacocks and the elegant swans become suspicious of each other because of their different abilities and start to arm themselves with sharpened feathers. Inevitably conflict ensures, and they are all killed. Out of this tragedy springs hope, when two chicks hatch. These chicks see only how similar they are, and decide to become friends. This book takes the themes of ‘Whoever You Are’ to the next level, and is more suited to Year 2 & 3. It could easily be used in older year levels as well.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- With teacher direction, students discuss the possible actions the birds could have taken that would have avoided the conflict.
- Role play the story, which children taking on the roles of the swans and the peacocks, modelling a new ending with a peaceful resolution for all parties.
- Use VoiceThread ([http://voicethread.com/](http://voicethread.com/)), to create a digital presentation on conflict resolution. Scan in children’s drawings of swans and peacocks, and have each child narrate their own suggestion as to how the issues of the story could be peacefully resolved. This could be shared at an assembly or similar gathering using a projector and speakers.

**Additional Resources:**

An excellent series of lessons about developing tolerance – builds from ‘Whoever You Are’.

Early Years: Prep to Year 3

**Todd Parr (2004). *The Peace Book***

**Annotation:**

With child-like smiling stick figures, bold, brilliant colour and upbeat text, this book offers different definitions of peace: offering a hug to a friend, keeping the streets clean, and so on. This brings a difficult abstract context within the realm of young students’ experience. The closing message peace is being who you are, is illustrated with Parr's usual multicultural mix of blue, green, brown, yellow and purple faces, introducing opportunities for discussion about tolerance, identity, diversity and multiculturalism as well as peace and community.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- Use a flash book creator such as FlipFlash Album ([http://www.flipflashalbum.com/](http://www.flipflashalbum.com/)) to collaboratively create a class version of ‘The Peace Book’ using definitions of peace suggested by students.
- Encourage children to sit quietly and concentrate on their breathing, to experience what peace can ‘feel’ like. Strategies to assist students with this could be taken from the resources available for *Silence, Stillness and Simplicity*, Brisbane Catholic Education’s Christian Meditation resource; [https://kweb.bne.catholic.edu.au/ree/RE/PW/Pages/MeditativePrayer.aspx](https://kweb.bne.catholic.edu.au/ree/RE/PW/Pages/MeditativePrayer.aspx)

**Additional Resources:**

A booklet about Todd Parr, his work promoting peace to young children and some ideas for teaching using *The Peace Book* and others he has written.


**Annotation:**

On one side of a barbed wire fence, a boy living in the rubble finds and nurtures a tiny plant. Will it thrive and grow? Can hope flourish amidst destruction? The story ends with joy, and the message that the human spirit is strong and that one day, the divisions created by war might be overcome.

This very simple story echoes the situation of many disenfranchised children around the world. Although not wordless, this book has strong illustrations and the use of colour reflects the mood of the boy, making it accessible to less confident readers. The themes are such that the book could be used with students of all ages.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- Discuss with students what events may have led to the boy living in rubble. Explore their current concepts of war and conflict.
- When the soldiers destroyed the garden ‘the boy thought his heart would break’ – discuss how he overcame his sadness. Ask students to consider times when they have been sad or disappointed, and brainstorm ways that they can overcome these feelings.
- Explore the symbolism of the green shoots, the vine and the butterflies, and the use of colour in the illustrations. Discuss the meaning of the sentence ‘roots are deep, and seeds spread’.
- Download the free trial version of ArtRage (available at [http://www.artrage.com/artrage-demos.html](http://www.artrage.com/artrage-demos.html)). Encourage the students to create their own artworks using symbols and colours inspired by the illustrations to depict a situation where they have faced and dealt with conflict in their own lives.
Middle Primary – Years 4-6

Sonya Hartnett (2006). *The Silver Donkey*

**Annotation:**

One bright spring morning in the woods of France, a soldier, blinded by the war, is found by a little girl named Coco, and her older sister Marcelle. The soldier tells the sisters marvellous tales, each story connected to the keepsake he carries in his pocket: a tiny silver donkey. As the days pass, Coco and Marcelle learn the truth behind the silver donkey, and what the precious object means: honesty, loyalty, and courage.

This book can be read aloud in whole or in part. The novel is multilayered, and could be used from Year 4 at a very basic level right through to Year 7, looking at more complex concepts such as the use of metaphor and symbol.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- Begin a list of new or difficult words as they are encountered in the text, and explore and discuss their dictionary definitions – why do the students think that the author chose to use complex words such as aggrieved, imperiously, beguiling, famished, unbreachable, and bedlam?
- Use this discussion to lead onto understanding the author’s intent through the story and its language – does the author think that war is a good thing or a bad thing? The author’s choice of language to depict ideology is most clear in the chapter ‘The Front’, particularly on pp102-105.
- Research the concept of talismans. What items are commonly used for this purpose? Why did the author choose to use a donkey as a talisman for this story?

**Additional Resources:**

A comprehensive series of lessons is available here [http://www1.curriculum.edu.au/rel//history/book.php?catrelid=1873](http://www1.curriculum.edu.au/rel//history/book.php?catrelid=1873) to support the use of the book. Although aimed at older students, the activities could be adapted, or as a springboard for other lesson ideas.
Marcia Williams (2007). *Archie's War*

**Annotation:**

Archie’s War is a fictionalised scrapbook compiled by Archie Albright, a 10 year old boy, living in London at the outbreak of the First World War. Archie records his experiences in words and illustrations, and also includes letters, postcards and cigarette cards posted from the front and words from propaganda posters and newspapers from the period. As the years of war wear on, Archie moves from initial excitement, to a gradual comprehension of the cost of war. Archie’s family feature largely in his story, and offer insights into what life was like for families during this time. The book cleverly retells key events of the war, and explores features of war such as propaganda, life on the battlefield and morale on the home front from the perspective of a boy growing through adolescence in a time of great conflict and disruption.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- Using the dates and events depicted in Archie’s scrapbook, compile a timeline of World War One, and compare this to the timeline here [http://www.historyonthenet.com/WW1/WW1_timeline.htm](http://www.historyonthenet.com/WW1/WW1_timeline.htm) or sourced from other information texts. Do they differ? Are there events Archie has included that have not been included in the formal timeline? Why would this be so?
- Explore the letters included in Archie’s War. As a group or individually, students can write their own letter, imagining that they are a soldier on the front, or writing from the perspective of a family member writing to a soldier who is at war. Research where Australian troops are currently stationed overseas, and consider sending them an email or postcard with good wishes as a class. Go to [http://www.defence.gov.au/message_to_troops.cfm](http://www.defence.gov.au/message_to_troops.cfm) to learn more.

**Additional Resources:**

An extremely comprehensive unit of work is available here [http://www.writeaway.org.uk/sites/default/files/archies_war_0.pdf](http://www.writeaway.org.uk/sites/default/files/archies_war_0.pdf). Also available are suggestions for literature circles or individual reading activities using Archie’s War: [http://www.writeaway.org.uk/sites/default/files/archies_war_reading_group_prompts_0.pdf](http://www.writeaway.org.uk/sites/default/files/archies_war_reading_group_prompts_0.pdf)
Upper Primary/Lower Secondary - Years 7-8

Davide Cali (2009). *The Enemy*

Annotation:

The Enemy was published in association with Amnesty International Australia. It opens on a black double page spread, with large white font, telling us ‘There’s a war on’. Over the next few pages, before the publication details and the title page, we are told that there are two soldiers; in two holes and that they are enemies. The story then opens, each page a vast expanse of white (except for at night), where simple text and images convey the story of one of the soldiers, as he waits in his hole, firing a shot each day and hiding from his enemy. He thinks about the similar situation his enemy is in, but knows from his ‘war manual’ that the enemy is different from him - the enemy is 'cruel and ruthless - not a human being'. Eventually, he is forced to leave his hole, and approaches the enemy – and realises the enemy is not so different, and that fear, ignorance and propaganda have resulted in huge misconceptions.

Suggested Teaching Strategies:

- Explore the use of propaganda in war. Discuss the ‘war manual’ and how it relies on fear and ignorance to convince the soldier of the nature of his enemy. Do an online search of war propaganda, and discuss the strategies used – excellent examples are available at [http://www.firstworldwar.com/posters/australia.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/posters/australia.htm)
- Discuss the one-sided view the story presents. Introduce the notion of bias, and consider the role it plays in this story. View this video [http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa_miller_shares_the_news_about_the_news.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa_miller_shares_the_news_about_the_news.html) and discuss the issue of bias in the media.
- Research the work of Amnesty International, who sponsored the publication of The Enemy. Students could select different Amnesty projects and individually or as a group present a case for why these projects are necessary using a persuasive genre.

Additional Resources:

Upper Primary/Lower Secondary - Years 7-8


**Annotation:**

This prayer can stimulate discussion and debate about a range of issues. John Marsden has used a repetitive, litany-like genre that reinforces the idea of prayer and meditation on the issues raised. Carefully chosen artworks compliment the text, adding greater depth and meaning. These artworks are acknowledged in some detail in the publishing notes, and it is worthwhile considering them in light of the lines that they are paired with. Concepts such as the journey through life, the endurance of traditional values, the nature of the human spirit, the conservation of nature and the overwhelming desire for peace and understanding are described in lyrical language, using metaphor and contrast.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- Students use the model presented in the book to create their own prayer for the 21st century – as one decade of this century has already past, they may choose to reflect on the more recent events to assist their choice of issues.
- Students choose one artwork from the book and research the artist. Are all of their works of a similar theme? How has their personal life influenced their work?
- Analyse the choice of artwork that accompanies each statement, and discuss its relevance and suitability. What other images may have been chosen? Students create their own artwork to accompany one of the statements from the book. Share at a school assembly or use an online tool such as Youblisher [http://www.youblisher.com/] to create a digital book to share online.
- Students research the traditional Irish blessing “May the road rise up to meet you./ May the wind be always at your back” which also uses this litany genre.

**Additional Resources:**

Gary Crew (2004). Memorial

Annotation:

In a small country town, a tree is planted next to a war memorial monument by returned servicemen. Many years later, a young boy is challenged to save the tree, when the council decides to cut it down because it has grown large and unruly, and is not only dislodging the war memorial but is in the way of development. The boy is told the history of a Moreton Bay fig by his great grandfather, grandparents, father and mother—especially its role as a war memorial. The tree is a representation of family history and home to many creatures, but can one small boy fight this battle and win?

Suggested Teaching Strategies:

- Take the text from the picture book and have students create a Wordle using the online tool available at [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net) – do any themes or words appear significantly? Use as a basis for discussing the concepts raised in the text.
- View the book without reading the text as a second activity. After analysing the text previously, challenge students to identify if additional concepts are communicated through Shaun Tan’s illustrations.
- Search for images of war memorials using Creative Commons search on Flickr ([http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/](http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/)) and other sources of creative commons and public domain images such as Wikimedia Commons ([http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)). Compare the memorials – do they differ from country to country? What aspects are similar in all war memorials? Which holds more meaning – the man-made memorials or a tree such as the one in this story?

Additional Resources:

A fascinating insight into Memorial by illustrator Shaun Tan: [http://www.shauntan.net/books/memorial.html#Memorial_comments](http://www.shauntan.net/books/memorial.html#Memorial_comments)

Middle Secondary: Years 9-10

John Marsden (2006). *Tomorrow, When the War Began*

John Marsden’s most well known book, recently released as a movie tells the story of a group of teenagers who are spending some time camping ‘out bush’ when a war breaks out in Australia. The story is told from the perspective of female protagonist, Ellie, as she and her group of friends form a guerrilla group and set about defending their home town. Little information is given about the ‘invaders’, although Australia’s attitude to our region and issues of conflict both within the friendship group and the larger scale outbreak are addressed.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- Use [http://www.exploroz.com/OntheRoad/Survival/Outback_Survival.aspx](http://www.exploroz.com/OntheRoad/Survival/Outback_Survival.aspx) to research how Ellie and her friends might have survived in the bush for a long period of time. How realistic is the book compared to the facts presented in this website?
- Consider the debate currently occurring with regard to Asylum Seekers. Research the debate and investigate whether propaganda is being utilised to motivate Australians to support current detention policies. As students to determine whether fears of invasion being played upon by politicians, and if so, how.

**Additional Resources:**

This book and the ensuing series has always been popular – the website here [http://www.rsimson.id.au/books/tomorrow/index.html](http://www.rsimson.id.au/books/tomorrow/index.html) is an extensive overview of the book and provides a great deal of raw material and ideas for an indepth teaching unit.

An excellent text on introducing the book to Year 9 is available here: [http://www.stella.org.au/index.php?id=30](http://www.stella.org.au/index.php?id=30) and the ideas could easily be adapted for older or younger readers.
Middle Secondary: Years 9-10

John Boyne (2007). The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas

This annotation is taken from the blurb, which is masterful in the way it intrigues the reader; it should be a focus of study in itself:

The story in this book is very difficult to describe. Usually we give some clues about the book on the jacket, but in this case we think that would spoil the reading of the book. We think it is important that you start to read without knowing what it is about.

If you do start to read this book, you will go on a journey with a nine-year-old boy called Bruno. (Though this isn’t a book for nine-year-olds.) And sooner or later you will arrive with Bruno at a fence. Fences like this exist all over the world. We hope you never have to encounter such a fence.

Suggested Teaching Strategies:

- The author, John Boyne, describes this book as a fable. Using http://www.lefavole.org/en/ students compare classic fables to The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas and identify the generic structure that marks it as a fable.

- Go to John Boyne’s website http://www.johnboyne.com/theboyninthestripedpyjamas.html and examine the different covers used in each country of publication. Why do publishers change the cover for sale in different countries? Which cover appeals to students the most; the least? Discuss the images chosen and the reasons for their selection, with respect to the countries they were used in.

- When reading the text, identify the words Bruno has misunderstood and consider why John Boyne chose to do this. For example, Bruno calls Auschwitz ‘Out-with’ – does his misunderstood interpretation have a double meaning for readers? Ensure students identify each of these terms, and research what they represent, to ensure the true meaning of the story emerges. This might be best done after reading the book in its entirety to ensure the experience is as the author intended.

Additional Resources:

Excellent resources for this book and for the accompanying movie abound; some include:
http://www.randomhouse.com/teachers/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780385751063&view=tg
Glenda Millard (2010). *A Small Free Kiss in the Dark*

**Annotation:**
Skip lives rough on the streets of Melbourne (a city not named, but identifiable form the text). He is a talented pavement artist, who hoards chalk and longs for companionship. He and Old Billy, a veteran of the streets often visit the State Library, and are there when the bombs begin to drop. Along with Max, a young boy alone as a result of the war, they move on to ‘Dreamland’ – the fictionalised Luna Park, where they meet Tia, and her newborn baby, Sixpence.

They take refuge in the House of Horrors ride, but as the real horrors draw closer, they realise the sacrifices they must make in order to escape. Unnamed invaders echo *Tomorrow When the War Began*, but rather than join the conflict, Skip and Billy choose to become members of ‘the third-side’ who ‘don’t believe in war’ and exist outside the conflict. Celebrated here is courage of another kind—loyalty, creativity, the generosity of those who have little, and the power of hope.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- The focus on homeless characters during a time of war when many become homeless could begin a discussion on stereotypes – do Skip and Old Billy fit the stereotype of ‘homeless people’? Use this discussion as a lead into the use of stereotypes in times of conflict – particularly through propaganda, and in the case of asylum seekers.
- Glenda Millard says she wanted to write a book that was not about war, but about hope. Has she been successful? Divide a page into two columns, and list on one side the passages from the text which are about war and conflict, and on the other the passages about hope and peace. Use a tool such as Wordle [http://www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net) to create tag clouds in order to identify significant words – display these clouds under the headings ‘War’ and ‘Peace’. Use these as a stimulus for writing about either topic.

**Additional Resources:**

Senior Secondary: Years 11-12


Annotation:
Najmah means ‘star’ and is the name of a young Afghan, alone when her father and older brother are conscripted by the Taliban and her mother and brother are killed in an air raid. Elaine, whose Islamic name is Nusrat, is also alone. She is an American who has come to Pakistan with her Afghan doctor husband so that he might run a clinic in Mazar-i-sharif, Afghanistan. She teaches refugee children in Peshawar in her garden under the persimmon tree, while waiting for the war to end. Just as Najmah’s father had always said that the stars would take care of her, Nusrat’s husband has promised that they would tell Nusrat where he was and that he was safe. As the two look to the skies for answers they both seek refuge in their own ways.

Suggested Teaching Strategies:
- There is little information available about the war in Afghanistan as seen by the people of Afghanistan. Students view [http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/inge_missmahl_brings_peace_to_the_minds_of_afghanistan.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/eng/inge_missmahl_brings_peace_to_the_minds_of_afghanistan.html) and discuss whether they believe the book accurately reflects life in modern day Afghanistan.
- Students critically analyse the authenticity of the story by responding to questions such as:
  - Which parts of the novel are you absolutely certain are true? How do you know? Where did you learn this information? Students can try to pinpoint the resources they rely upon to get their “facts.”
  - Whose story is missing? Students can create visual representations of the social locations (e.g., the race, class, gender, education) of each of the characters. Given these details, whose story is this? Whose stories are not here, and where might we go to learn about their stories?

Additional Resources:
An excellent teaching resource with many additional resource suggestions is available at [http://teachmulticulturallit.wikispaces.com/Under+the+Persimmon+Tree](http://teachmulticulturallit.wikispaces.com/Under+the+Persimmon+Tree)
Abbas El-Zein (2001). *Tell the running water*

**Annotation:**

The scene is set in Beirut in 1975. It is a city torn apart by civil war. The young lives of the three main characters – Kareem Kadar, a keen musician and photographer, Raawya Naoum, a daughter of a wealthy business man and Akram Mussa, the son of local artisan – are torn apart by the ravages created by the Monster of War. It seeps into their souls, changes them, causing them, and others around them, to act in ways that Lebanon at peace would never have done.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- Students research the civil war of Lebanon, with particular attention to the impacts on the civilians of Beirut. Choose one character, and describe how the war influenced their life.

- The story of Kareem, Raawya and Akram is told from the perspective of locals living amid the civil war. How does this portrayal of the war in Beirut and the impact upon the civilians differ to that promoted by external media sources? Critically analyse the descriptions of the war from the book and compare to news reports from Beirut at the time. These reports may be sourced via newspaper archives available via the Google News Archives search.

**Additional Resources:**

The website of Abbas El-Zein has additional resources and information about his writings. [http://abbaselzein.com/](http://abbaselzein.com/)

Author Abbas El-Zein was interviewed on the ABC and speaks about the experiences that shape his writing. The transcript is available here:[http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/enc/stories/s1569464.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/enc/stories/s1569464.htm)
Senior Secondary: Years 11-12


**Annotation:**
Fifteen-year-old Daisy leaves New York City to stay with her Aunt Penn’s family on a farm in England. Soon after Daisy arrives, Aunt Penn goes on a business trip and is stranded abroad when England is invaded by terrorists. The cousins must fend for themselves. As power fails, and systems fail, the farm becomes more isolated. Despite the war, it’s a kind of Eden, with no adults in charge and no rules, a place where Daisy’s uncanny bond with her cousins grows into something rare and extraordinary. But the war is everywhere, and Daisy and her cousins must lead each other into a world that is unknown in the scariest, most elemental way. Daisy and her cousin Edmond fall in love, but they’re separated when the military takes over the farm. Daisy and nine-year-old Piper are sent to another town, and the boys elsewhere. The girls find themselves in a terrifying world, but their desire to be reunited with their family gives them the courage they need to survive the devastation of the war.

**Suggested Teaching Strategies:**

- Students view the book trailer online at [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qt_aDmkEPTQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qt_aDmkEPTQ) and create their own in response to reading the book

- The invaders in this book, like in ‘A Small Free Kiss in the Dark’ and ‘Tomorrow when the War Began’ are unnamed. Students discuss why they believe the authors chose not to reveal the invading force’s country of origin. Respond to the topic ‘the worst fears are those that are unnamed’.

**Additional Resources:**


Another good source of teaching ideas is [http://www.writeaway.org.uk/content/how_live_now](http://www.writeaway.org.uk/content/how_live_now)