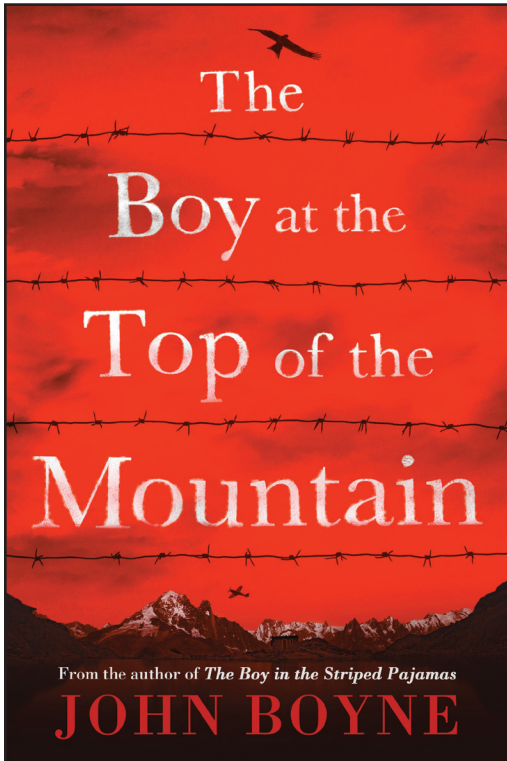


A Teacher's Guide for The Boy at the Top of the Mountain

FOR
USE WITH
COMMON CORE
STATE
STANDARDS



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ABOUT THE BOOK

When Pierrot becomes an orphan, he must leave his home in Paris for a new life with his aunt Beatrix, a servant in a wealthy Austrian household. But this is no ordinary time, for it is 1935 and the Second World War is fast approaching; and this is no ordinary house, for this is the Berghof, the home of Adolf Hitler. Pierrot is quickly taken under Hitler's wing and thrown into an increasingly dangerous new world: a world of terror, secrets, and betrayal from which he may never be able to escape.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JOHN BOYNE is the author of many books for adults and for children, including *Stay Where You Are and Then Leave* and the #1 *New York Times* best seller *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas*. He lives in Dublin, Ireland.

This guide is aligned with the NCSS C3 Framework for Social Studies Standards and the Common Core Standards. Standards for the sixth grade are noted but activities can be applied to grades three through seven. To attain specific grade-level standards for their classrooms and students, teachers are encouraged to adapt the activities listed in this guide to their classes' needs. You know your kids best!



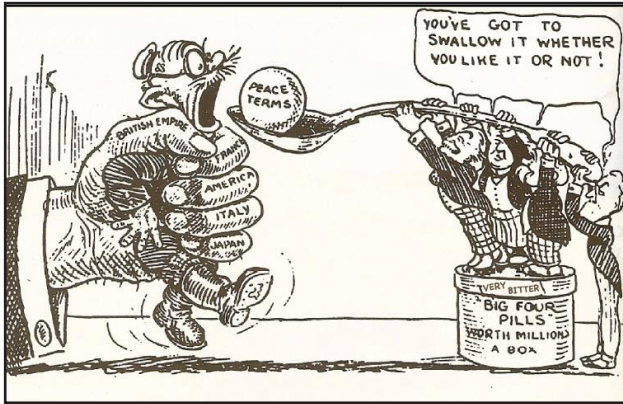
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PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

◆ Review the impact of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles using a video clip from the History Channel. Have students work in small groups and assign each group a country that participated in the war. Examples include the United States, France, Great Britain, and Germany. Next, have each group design an advertisement explaining their point of view on the Treaty of Versailles.

Source: <http://www.history.com/topics/world-war-i/treaty-of-versailles>

◆ Using the provided political cartoon and analysis worksheet link, have students work in pairs to analyze the cartoon. After discussing the elements of the cartoon as a whole class, have each pair design a cartoon with another perspective of the Treaty of Versailles.



Source: Political Cartoon Analysis Guide from the National Archives:

https://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/worksheets/cartoon_analysis_worksheet.pdf

◆ To introduce the impact of World War I on the soldiers who fought, have students read "In Flanders Fields," by Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae (1872–1918), who served as a surgeon in the Canadian army during World War I. After discussing the poem and its symbolism, have each student illustrate a copy of the poem.

In Flanders Fields the poppies blow
Between the crosses row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.
We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie
In Flanders fields.
Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Boyne develop Pierrot's father's point of view about his German heritage? Be sure to cite text evidence to support your answer.
2. How does Pierrot react to the death of his father?
3. Compare a map of Europe created before World War I to one created in 1936.. What has changed? Why were these changes made? How did these changes impact Europeans in the 1930s?
4. What are your first impressions of Aunt Beatrix?
5. Predict how Pierrot's life will change now that he lives at the Berghof with Aunt Beatrix and Adolf Hitler.
6. As chapter 6 comes to a close, it is clear Aunt Beatrix and Ernst are up to something. How should Pierrot react? Should he pretend he saw nothing or report what he saw?
7. In chapter 7 it is revealed that Pierrot's mother died of tuberculosis. What is this disease and what was its impact on Europe overall?
8. "Pierrot cleared his throat and stood tall. 'In the presence of this blood banner,' he began, 'which represents our Führer, I swear to devote all my energies and my strength to the savior of our country, Adolf Hitler. I am willing and ready to give up my life for him, so help me God.'" How would Pierrot's father have reacted to this declaration by Pierrot?
9. By chapter 9, Aunt Beatrix is alarmed at how much time Pierrot is spending with Hitler. Why does Pierrot enjoy his time with Hitler so much? Why is Beatrix so concerned?
10. After the execution of Ernst and Beatrix, Pierrot blames himself. Was he to blame for their deaths? If not, who is?
11. Based on Hitler's behavior in chapter 13, what can you infer is happening in the war?
12. Why did Boyne name chapter 13 The Darkness and the Light?
13. "It was Pierrot who had climbed out of bed that morning, but it was Pieter who returned to it now before falling soundly asleep." What does Boyne mean by this? How will this change impact Pierrot's character in the future?
14. What does the recurring use of "Heil Hitler" show about the control of Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich?

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.3 Describe how a particular story's or drama's plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.5 Analyze how a particular sentence, chapter, scene, or stanza fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the theme, setting, or plot.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.6 Explain how an author develops the point of view of the narrator or speaker in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.1 Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.2.B Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.7 Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.

D2.GEO.6.6-8. Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.

D2.GEO.8.6-8. Analyze how relationships between humans and environments extend or contract spatial patterns of settlement and movement.

D2.HIS.15.6-8. Evaluate the relative influence of various causes of events and developments in the past.

D2.HIS.16.6-8. Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.

COMMON CORE ACTIVITIES

◇ “He said nothing for a long time, and I decided to wait until he was ready. And then finally he said that he had a story to tell: a story of a boy who had started out with love and decency in his heart but had found himself corrupted by power. The story of a boy who had committed crimes with which he would have to live forever, a boy who had hurt people who loved him and been a party to the deaths of those who only ever showed him kindness, who had sacrificed his right to his own name and would have to spend a lifetime to earn it back. The story of a man who wanted to find some way to make amends for his actions and who would always remember the words of a maid named Herta, who had told him never to pretend that he didn’t know what was going on, that such a lie would be the worst crime of all.”

Based on this excerpt from chapter 14, write a six-word memoir for Pierrot.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.D Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.

◇ “Looking up, his eyes took in the man’s earth-gray uniform and the heavy black belt he wore across his waist, the calf-high black jackboots and the patch on his left sleeve that showed an eagle with its wings outstretched over a hooked cross.”

Using the description in the novel, sketch the man Pierrot describes. Next, research what German soldiers looked like in 1936 and see if your picture matches.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.6.1 Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

◇ “‘Our brother, like your father, fought in the Great War,’ Simone told him. ‘And while some men were able to return to their normal lives after the fighting ended, there were many – the vast majority, I believe – who were unable to cope with the memories of what they’d seen and what they’d done. Of course, there are doctors who have done everything they can to make the world understand the traumas of what took place twenty years ago. You only have to think of the work of Dr. Jules Persoinne here in France or Dr. Alfie Summerfield in England, who have made it their life’s work to educate the public on how the previous generation suffered and how it is our responsibility to help them.’ ‘My father fought in the Somme,’ said Pierrot. ‘My mother always said that although he didn’t die in the war, it was the war that killed him.’”

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or shell shock as it was known during World War I, is something that has impacted soldiers throughout history. Research a conflict and the impact on the soldiers who fought. Create a presentation that includes multiple sources, statistics, and visuals. Compare your findings with the information Simone reveals in chapter 3.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.4 Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

D1.5.6-8. Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of views represented in the sources.

D2.HIS.1.6-8. Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

◇ “Some were used as messenger dogs; others as mortar detectors, for a dog can hear the sound of incoming shells much faster than a human can. Dogs have saved many a life in this way. Just as they can smell chlorine or mustard gas and alert their masters.”

In chapter 8, Hitler describes to Pierrot the importance of wartime dogs. However, dogs were not the only animal to help during a time of war. Further, dogs had a variety of jobs not discussed by Hitler. Choose an animal and research their role in war.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

◇ Write a chapter of the novel from Beatrix’s perspective.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.



Nicole Woulfe has her bachelor of arts in history and a master of arts in secondary education from the University of New Hampshire. She is currently teaching at Sanborn Regional Middle School.