

Lesson Plans on Sri Lanka

PBS Frontline

Sri Lanka – Living with Terror, May 2002 (Grade 7-12)

<http://www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/srilanka/>

New York Times Daily Lesson Plan

Calm After the Storm: Examining Changes in Sri Lankan Society in the Wake of the Tsunami, January 2005 (Grade 6-8, 9-12)

http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20050105wednesday.html?searchpv=learning_lessons

New York Times Daily Lesson Plan

Leading Ladies: Exploring Women and Leadership around the World, October 2000 (Grade 6-8, 9-12)

http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/lessons/20001011wednesday.html?searchpv=learning_lessons

Peace Corps Lesson Plans

Encountering Very Different Ways of Life (Grade 6-8, 9-12)

Breaching the Gulf Between Cultures (Grade 6-8, 9-12)

Coming to Terms with Cultural Differences (Grade 6-8, 9-12)

<http://www.peacecorps.gov/www/educators/lessonplans/lesson.cfm?lpid=437>

PBS P.O.V.

Lesson plan in conjunction with a film, *No More Tears Sister* (Grade 9-12)

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2006/nomoretears/for.html>

EDSITEment (National Endowment for the Humanities)

On the Road with Marco Polo: Sea Voyage to India (Grades 3-5)

http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=494

Articles on Child Soldiering in Sri Lanka

BBC:

Analysis: Sri Lanka's child soldiers (January 2003)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2713035.stm

This sobering account discusses how children are abducted and how ineffective rehabilitation has been so far. It also explores the Tamil Tigers are reluctant to admit to child soldiering and therefore has hindered peace efforts.

Twenty years on- Riots that led to war (July 2003)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3090111.stm

Anti-Tamil riots in 1983 marked the beginning of the civil war. The roots of conflict lie in racism between Tamils and Sinhalese.

Rebels release 100 child soldiers (April 2004)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/world/newsid_3629000/3629551.stm

Tamil Tigers have been using child soldiers in their war against the government. Some children have been released though. A ceasefire had just been accepted but training of children has continued.

Tamil Tigers 'drafting children' (January 2005)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4171251.stm

Tamil Tigers have been recruiting children from relief camps.

UN plea to Tigers on child troops (February 2006)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4712318.stm

The UN Children's Fund has reported that since the truce, child recruitment has increased and the average age has lowered. Lately, it has decreased a little bit but the UN demands that not a single child should be recruited. Tamil Tigers claim that they return children to their families if they discover that the child is underage.

Sri Lanka: Stories from conflict zones (August 2006)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/5278756.stm

This article provides sobering accounts from people all over Sri Lanka. Observers talk about the worsening refugee crisis, a young boy talks about fear, others talk about terrorist attacks in Colombo and bomb raids over the countryside.

Sri Lanka youth 'seized to fight' (November 2006)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6144200.stm

This report discusses credible allegations that a government ally is kidnapping children and teenagers for soldiering.

Tamil Tigers kidnap 21 children (December 2006)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6192217.stm

Tamil Tigers admit that they have abducted 21 students for the Tamil Tigers. In the past, Tigers have denied claims of forced recruitment, noting that many children joined with their own free will.

Tamil group 'recruiting children' (January 2007)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/6293375.stm

A faction that may be allied with the government has been accused in abducting children for soldiering.

Timeline: Sri Lanka (May 2007)

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/country_profiles/1166237.stm

This article provides a timeline starting in the 5th century until 2007. It traces the roots of the civil war.

The Observer and Guardian:

Desperate Tamil rebels snatch village children to serve as foot soldiers (January 2006)

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,6903,1676250,00.html>

Tamil rebels are kidnapping children off the streets to replace their ranks after the tsunami. Accounts from parents and children tell of the harrowing effect that this behavior has on communities.

Tigers tear each other apart (May 2006)

<http://observer.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,,1769335,00.html>

The human costs of the conflict have been astounding. Families are wantonly destroyed and suspicion and fear is rife. Scholars and rebels contend that Col. Karuna is funded by the government for the struggle.

International Herald Tribune:

Sri Lankan peace talks end in deadlock over road blockade (Sept 2006)

http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2006/10/29/europe/EU_GEN_Switzerland_Sri_Lanka_Talks.php

Both sides disagree over the route for humanitarian aid, destroying hope for a renewal of the ceasefire.

UN says Sri Lankan group continues to recruit child soldiers (April 2007)

<http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/04/28/asia/AS-GEN-Sri-Lanka-Child-Soldiers.php>

UN believes that the Karuna faction has not done enough to end the recruitment of children. It persists despite claims by the group that recruitment has stopped

UNICEF:

Children being caught up in recruitment drive in north east (June 2004)

http://www.unicef.org/media/media_21990.html

This article condemns the Tamil Tigers for not taking greater steps to end the forced or voluntary recruitment of children. Many children have been released, reunited with their families and placed into programs for health and education; however, the Tigers have continued recruitment.

Human Rights News:

Sri Lanka: Child Tsunami Victims Recruited by Tamil Tigers (January 2005)

<http://www.hrw.org/english/docs/2005/01/14/slanka10016.htm>

Tigers are recruiting children from relief camps to replace the numbers who were killed in the Tsunami. The author writes that more needs to be done to care for even more vulnerable children and prevent them from joining Tamil Tigers.

Christian Science Monitor:

Outrage over child soldiers in Sri Lanka (November 2006)

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/1129/p07s02-wosc.html>

This excellent article discusses child recruitment patterns for both the Tamil Tigers and the Karuna faction. It notes that high unemployment and low salaries feed child recruitment into the army and the rebel forces. It has some numbers on the amount of child soldiers in Sri Lanka.

World Press Review:

A Former Child Soldier Speaks Out (March 2004)

<http://www.worldpress.org/Asia/1840.cfm>

This article records an interview with a young girl who had voluntarily joined the Tamil Tigers. Her biggest complaint was the poor treatment that she and the other children received. She reports that there were 300 children training with her. She reports that some joined voluntarily like herself while others were forcibly recruited. She feels that she has no prospects for the future.

CNN:

Sri Lanka's stolen children (October 2003)

<http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/south/10/14/sri.lanka.abduction/index.html>

The forced recruitment of children has further caused agony to an already war torn area. Families fear the loss of their children, and have tried demanding the return of their children from their rebel groups. The youth are deeply concerned (for obvious reasons) and this impacts their studies.

Child soldiers freed in Sri Lanka (October 2003)

<http://edition.cnn.com/2003/WORLD/asiapcf/south/10/04/sl.children/index.html>

With the ceasefire, some children have been released by the Tamil Tigers to their parents. However, reports indicate that the Tamil Tigers have increased their forced recruitment of children. This article contains brief reactions of the children released and noted that many chose to join due to desperate reasons.

Teach Kids Peace:

Sri Lanka: Tamil Tigers Draft Child Soldiers (November 2004)

<http://www.teachkidspeace.com/doc332.php>

Despite the agreements to end child soldiering, Tamil Tigers have continued to recruit children. The rebel group intimidates and beats families who refuse to offer their children to the group. This article contains brief accounts of children who had joined the Tigers.

Novels on Sri Lanka

Waking the Tiger: A Novel of Sri Lanka by Leonard Feinberg (2005)

Waking the Tiger is a novel set in late-1950's Sri Lanka, a country at the edge of a gathering storm of violence. Feinberg weaves a complex story of the clash between cultures and castes, expats and ex-colonials, Hindu swamis and Buddhist priests, politicians and entrepreneurs, Sinhalese and Tamils.

Heaven's Edge: A Novel by Romesh Gunesequera (2004)

With his family gone and London holding nothing more for him, Marc is drawn to his ancestral homeland--an island reminiscent of the author's native Sri Lanka--where his grandfather was born and his father met and courted his mother and later died. But violence and repression have ravaged the once paradisiacal place, and Marc's visit is bleak until he meets Uva, who established an illegal farm after losing her parents and home in the conflict.

Monkfish Moon by Romesh Gunesequera (1996)

Monkfish Moon is a collection of nine haunting stories. Written with startling grace, together they create a compelling picture of Sri Lanka, a country of teeming natural beauty and a society in turmoil.

The Sandglass by Romesh Gunesequera (1996)

In Gunesequera's fine second novel, the tragedy of strife-torn Sri Lanka is encapsulated in the fates of two warring families. Moving back and forth in time, Gunesequera slowly unfolds his tale of secrecy, betrayal, and loss.

Reef by Romesh Gunesequera (1996)

Shortlisted for the Booker Prize, this thoughtful, entrancing tale of a Sinhalese houseboy's maturation takes place in the early 1980s, in the edenic calm before Sri Lanka erupts in violence. Marine biology and native cuisine become metaphors for political and personal change as Gunesequera chronicles the story of Triton, who is 11 years old in 1962, his father an alcoholic, his mother dead, when he comes to the estate of aristocratic bachelor Ranjan Salgado.

Free at Last in Paradise: A Historical Novel on Sri Lanka by Ananda W.P. Guruge (1998)

A peek into the social, political, religious, and cultural evolutions of modern Sri Lanka (Ceylon), this fictional autobiography spans a century of upheavals, culminating in the country's independence from the British in 1948.

Bodies in Motion: Stories by Mary Anne Mohanraj (2006)

Mohanraj, born in Sri Lanka and educated in the U.S., portrays two Sri Lankan families woven together for several generations by bonds of friendship, marriage, and unsanctioned love affairs. Some emigrate to America or England to complete their education. A few marry whites, some marry other Sri Lankan immigrants, and some return home for traditional arranged marriages, returning to the U.S. to raise their families.

Anil's Ghost: A Novel by Michael Ondaatje (2001)

Anil's Ghost is set during a war where the enemy is difficult to identify in the bloody sectarian upheaval that ripped Sri Lanka apart in the 1980s and '90s. The protagonist, Anil Tissera, a native Sri Lankan, left her homeland at 18 and returns to it 15 years later only as part of an international human rights fact-finding mission. In the intervening years she has become a forensic anthropologist--a career that has landed her in the killing fields of Central America, digging up the victims of Guatemala's dirty war. Now she's come to Sri Lanka on a similar quest. Reading guide:

http://www.bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/detail/index.cfm?book_number=517

Handwriting: Poems by Michael Ondaatje (2000)

In his 10th collection, Ondaatje transports us to his childhood home of Sri Lanka. With strikingly sensuous imagery, he conjures a land of bangles, cattle bells, stilt-walkers, and a 1000-year-old Buddha. Ondaatje not only proves most definitively that music is the key to unlocking a reader's heart, but also argues for poetry's healing powers in times of strife.

Running in the Family by Michael Ondaatje (1993)

In the late 1970s Ondaatje returned to his native island of Sri Lanka. As he records his journey through the drug-like heat and intoxicating fragrances of that "pendant off the ear of India," Ondaatje simultaneously retraces the baroque mythology of his Dutch-Ceylonese family.

The Flower Boy: A Novel by Karen Roberts (2001)

Set during the thirteen uneasy, final years of British rule in Ceylon, Roberts's debut novel relates in simple yet eloquent prose the story of two children and their families whose lives, despite cultural and class differences, become deeply entwined.

July by Karen Roberts (2002)

Priyanthi Silva is born in Sri Lanka into a peaceful, loving Sinhalese family, but into a turbulent country dogged by religious and political tensions. She and her rebellious brother Hemantha, grow up in Araliya Gardens, a tropical paradise full of orchids, araliyas and mango trees. Their neighbours are Christian Tamils whose gentle, handsome son is Hemantha's best friend. When Priyanthi is older, the two families spend a holiday together by the sea. Priyanthi and Niranjana's eyes are opened up to a strange world outside their protected existence.

Cinnamon Gardens: A Novel by Shyam Selvadurai (1999) – Young Adult Literature

Colombo, Ceylon, in 1927 is a fragrant, lush, and beautiful city. For the Kandiah family—a mother and three young daughters living in a simple bungalow within the exclusive Cinnamon Gardens suburb—it is also politically complex, socially restricting, and heading irreversibly into an unknowable future. Selvadurai portrays the national and international, religious, political, historical, and cultural controversies of a much larger stage.

Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai (1997)

Set in Sri Lanka, this poignant coming-of-age novel charts a boy's loss of innocence as he grapples with family conflict, political realities and his homosexuality. The story is shot through with the tensions and bloody violence between Sri Lanka's Buddhist Sinhalese majority and its Hindu Tamil minority. Selvadurai, who was born in Sri Lanka and now lives in Toronto, captures his protagonist's difficult passage into his own identity—of which his homosexuality is just one component.

Swimming in the Monsoon Sea by Shyam Selvadurai (2007) – grade 9 and up

In Sri Lanka in 1980, 14-year-old Amrith is forced to confront his feelings about his birth family when Nireesh, a cousin from Canada, visits. He falls in love with the boy, jealously refusing to share him with his adoptive sisters, in spite of their obvious interest. The arc of this sensitive coming-of-age story moves slowly but inexorably to its breaking point, lingering over details of Sri Lankan life. The author's affection for the country of his childhood is evident in this sympathetic and insightful look at first love.