



Global Voices Information Sheet

Cluster bombs



In Laos, on his 16th birthday, Phongsavath Manithong lost both his hands when he picked up a 50-year-old cluster bomblet left over from the Vietnam War. (Photo: International Campaign to Ban Landmines)

Background Info

- Cluster bombs were first used in 1942 during World War Two. Since then they have been used in conflicts in at least 31 countries.
- During the Vietnam War, from 1965 to 1973, the United States dropped an estimated 410,000 cluster bombs — more than 260 million ‘bomblets’ — on the country of Laos.
- Israel has used cluster bombs on Syria and Lebanon. The U.S. has used cluster bombs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Syria is using cluster bombs against its own people right now.
- The cluster bombs can have very high “dud rates”, meaning some bomblets do not explode when they hit the ground. Depending on the type of bomb and when it was made, the dud rate can be anywhere from five to more than 40 per cent.
- A bomblet that has not exploded is very dangerous. It can explode if it is picked up or dropped.
- Bomblets are usually small and have interesting shapes that can make them look like toys to children, who pick them up when they find them. Sometimes they fall in farm fields and get buried, then explode when the farmer digs in his field.
- According to some estimates, 98 per cent of people killed or injured by cluster bombs are civilians — not soldiers. A quarter of them are children.
- In 2008, the United Nations proposed a new treaty where countries could agree to never use, make or encourage the use of cluster bombs. 107 countries signed the treaty including 7 of 14 countries that have used cluster bombs and 17 of 34 countries who make them. 76 countries have now ratified the UN Convention on Cluster Munitions.
- Canada has signed, but not ratified, the treaty.

Key terms

- **Cluster bomb or munition** — A weapon that scatters dozens or even hundreds very small “bomblets” over a wide area. These bomblets can be as small as a baseball. Cluster bombs can be dropped from an airplane or helicopter, or fired by rocket or artillery gun.
- **Laggard** — Someone who is too slow and falls behind everyone else.
- **Ratify** — To officially confirm or adopt a law or treaty that has been passed or signed.
- **Stockpile** — To store large quantities of something.

Global Voices Elementary Resources

Note to Educators:

The following activities are designed to stimulate a current events discussion. Generative in nature, these questions can be a launching point for additional assignments or research projects. Teachers are encouraged to adapt these activities to meet the contextual needs of their classroom.

In some cases, reading the article with students may be appropriate, coupled with reviewing the information sheet to further explore the concepts and contexts being discussed. From here, teachers can select from the questions provided below. Activities are structured to introduce students to the issues, then allow them to explore and apply their learnings. Extension and conclusion activities are included to challenge students and finally, encourage them to reflect on the issues at hand.

Since these activities are designed as discussions rather than formal lessons, assessment strategies are not included.

Themes and Course Connections

- Themes: Remembrance Day, Highway of Heroes, Honouring
- Course Connections: The Arts, English, Social Studies, History

Materials

- Global Voices column
- Computer with internet capabilities and a projector
- Craft supplies for poppy and flower creation—construction paper, scissors, glue, dark writing utensil.

Specific Expectations and Learning Goals

Students will:

- Develop and express responses to issues and problems.
- Reassess their responses to issues on the basis of new information.
- Participate in active group work and class discussions.
- Communicate effectively in written and spoken language or other forms of expression.
- Demonstrate the ability to think critically.
- Develop, express, and defend a position on an issue and explain how to put the ideas into action.

Knowledge and Understanding

1. Guided Reading: The Global Voices Column (estimated time: 20 minutes)
 - a. Have students sit in a circle and distribute one copy of the Global Voices column to each student.
 - b. Pre-reading steps:
 - i. Make predictions: ask students to read the title of the column. After doing so, ask them to make predictions as to what the column is going to be about.
 - ii. Introduce vocabulary from the column.
 - iii. Assess prior knowledge: ask students to discuss what they already know about these topics.
 - c. Reading steps:
 - i. Go around the circle and have each student read a section of the column to the class, so that everyone gets a turn to read.

- ii. As students are reading, offer guidance and coaching by providing prompts, asking questions, and encouraging attempts at reading strategy application.
 - d. Post reading steps:
 - i. Encourage students to provide a summary of the column in order to ensure they have understood the series of events.
 - ii. Ask questions about the text to judge comprehension
2. Discussing the Global Voices Column (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. Ask students the following suggested questions about the column, encourage them to use evidence from the Global Voices column to support their answers:
 - i. What is the message in this column?
 - ii. What perspectives are presented in this column? Which ones are left out?
 - iii. What problem is presented in this column?
3. Media Literacy (estimated time: 15 minutes)
 - a. On a piece of paper ask each student to write the title of the column at the top of the page. Underneath the heading, have them create a chart with two columns across and five rows down.
 - b. In the first column, have them write the following questions:
 - i. What is the title of this column?
 - ii. Who is the author?
 - iii. What is the purpose of the column?
 - iv. What statistics or facts are listed in the column?
 - v. Are there biases or obvious points of view?
 - c. Have the students revisit the Global Voices column and fill in the chart answering the above questions.
 - d. Discuss the students' charts as a class. Address the reasons why it is important to understand the source and potential bias of a website or print resource offering news information. Explain that just because a source has a bias doesn't mean it has no value. One of the traditional purposes of publications is to express opinions and attempt to convince readers of their validity. Explain that this is why it's important for each of them to form their own opinion while reading publications instead of agreeing with everything.

Thinking

1. Asking Questions (estimated time: 10 minutes)
 - a. The column describes the tragic costs of weapons like cluster bombs. Hold a class discussion to help students deal with this troubling topic.
 - i. Where is Iraq?
 - ii. Where is Lebanon?
 - iii. Where is Syria?
 - iv. What is a cluster bomb?
 - v. What does "laggard" mean? (falling behind others, slower than desired or expected)
 - vi. What does "ratify" mean? (give formal consent to an agreement, making it officially valid)
 - vii. What is an "ally"? (person, organization, or country that cooperates with another, they side with and support each other in times of need)
 - viii. Why does the article say the production of certain weapons (e.g. nuclear bombs, cluster bombs) are limited or prohibited?
 - ix. Were you surprised, shocked, frustrated, angered, interested in learning more about the issue, etc. when you read the article?

Communication

1. Highway of Heroes (estimated time: 15 minutes)

- a. Every year on November 11th we remember those who have served in the armed forces. But this is not the only time we honour those who have served, when tragedy strikes many Canadians take to the “Highway of Heroes” to pay tribute to the fallen.
- b. When fallen Canadian soldiers return home they make the journey between CFB Trenton and Toronto on a stretch of Highway 401; it is known as the Highway of Heroes
- c. Show students the news clip from an NBC News broadcast from 2008.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1R8qLAmkLU>
- d. Ask students a few questions about the news clip and the Highway of Heroes:
 - i. What is Veteran’s Day
 - ii. What is the news story about?
 - iii. Why is it important to remember and honour the fallen?
 - iv. How do we know it makes a difference?
 - v. Had you heard of the Highway of Heroes before?
 - vi. What do you think about the Highway of Heroes?

Application

1. Say it with a Poppy (estimated time: 30 minutes)
 - a. With the publication of John McCrea’s poem “In Flanders Fields,” the image of the poppy became a symbol of remembrance. Students will make construction paper poppies as well as flowers in remembrance of the other fallen during times of armed conflict like those mentioned in the article.
 - b. Tell students they will write a “thank you” or “I remember” statement to honour those who have served in the Canadian Armed Forces and all the others who have fallen.
 - c. Print on the board the following statements and instruct students to choose one to begin their statement then instruct students to complete the statement:
 - i. “I will remember because...”
 - ii. “I will remember by...”
 - iii. “Thank you for...”
 - d. Have students hand in their statements for review.
 - e. Create a craft station with coloured paper, scissors, glue and pencils. Students should create a poppy and another flower such as a lily, daisy or tulip. The flowers should be large enough to write their statement on clearly.
 - f. While students are creating their flowers, review the statements for clarity, spelling and grammar.
 - g. Once students are finished, hand back their statements and allow student to write out their statements on their flowers using a black or dark coloured pencil crayon.
2. Ask students why it is important to remember and honour the contributions of Canadians and remember all those who have fallen during times of conflict.
3. Collect the flowers when everyone is finished and display them on the walls of the classroom or in the hallway to share with visitors. Include a title that describes the collection.

Additional Resources

In addition to the above lesson plans, share these resources with your students

Free The Children www.freethechildren.com

Weday.com www.weday.com

“Highway of Heroes” NBC News clip <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1R8qLAmkLU>

“Highway of Heroes” The Trews, music video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrkgV5bl7kQ>

