

IDEAS 82

**International Online Teachers Society
Debate
Educational Materials For
Advance and Upper Intermediate
Students**



**International Online Teachers Society
Publishing Committee**



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THE 82nd INTERNATIONAL ONLINE TEACHERS SOCIETY ESSAY CONTEST

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SEEING WAR IN AN OLD SOLDIER'S EYES

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My late maternal grandfather was a soldier under the command of the United States Armed Forces of the Far East (USAFFE). Every time Grandpa Florendo came to visit, he would talk about how he'd survived the dreadful Second World War. I always enjoyed listening to his stories of bravery and fortitude as he fought with soldiers of the Imperial Army that had occupied our country during that time. Unfortunately, my dear grandfather never got to be recognized as a war veteran primarily because he, along with many others, escaped during the dreadful Bataan Death March. Although many out there would say that Grandpa's act was characteristic of cowardice and betrayal of all he had sworn to as a soldier of his country, I am still proud that Grandpa chose to run away when he did. Otherwise, he would not have been able to regale me with countless tales of heroism during the war.

Once, my mother's late aunt came to visit us. She was a cousin of my grandfather and her own late husband, also a soldier in the Second World War, had been killed in the war. She had a discussion with my Grandpa about World War II. Their discussion must have escalated into an argument because my Grandpa started to raise his voice while my mother's aunt started speaking in a shrill voice. You can imagine how their old-people-argument suddenly turned funny when mom's aunt said, "Ha, the reason why you never got to be given honors and benefits for fighting in the war was because you are not a VETERAN; you believed that time you had BETTER RUN! Ha-ha!" Grandpa was fuming and mad. He called my mom and told her to make her aunt stop or else!

Many of us most likely have an old relative or an ancestor who had been in the war, either as a soldier or a civilian. I think many out there have also heard their own grandparents talk about how war had affected their lives and changed their perspectives. In my late grandfather's case, he may have foreseen how finishing the Death March could take him away from his family forever. He might have feared that cruelty from the invading soldiers could snuff his life out instantly so he chose to escape to freedom and run back to his family.

My mom was just a little girl then. If she had lost her father during the war, she might not have been able to build the life she was able to go through. She might not have become what she had become and might not have had her father by her side during her wedding to my late father. A single alteration back then may have created a series of alterations today. The Second World War brought out soldiers in people, and those soldiers have continued to be a great part of what makes today what it is!

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are the effects of war on a nation?
2. Why is it important to learn the lessons of war?
3. Does war always have destructive effects? How can war make us better citizens of the world?
4. If World War II hadn't happened, what are the possible consequences? Be as imaginative as needed.
5. Does one need to die in war in order to become a hero? Why or why not?



HOW WAR MOBILIZES PEOPLE

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War always brings out the best and the worst in people.

During wars, many people become more concerned about their fellowmen's welfare. The Second World War served to demonstrate this, as civilians did their best to protect soldiers from getting caught. My mother told me the story of how her own great uncle, who was the village chief when she was just a little girl, was accosted by invading Imperial Forces soldiers. The soldiers wanted information on the location of the fighting soldiers in their village. Her great uncle was hung upside down in an old well, tortured by being bayoneted all over his body while his family and relatives were forced to sing loudly and watch helplessly. That was how mom's great uncle showed how he valued his loyalty to his countrymen. He never gave the cruel invaders any information. For that, he died before his family's eyes.

Stories have been told of the kindness of civilians towards wounded soldiers during the war. We have heard of how such generous people had sparingly given what they could so the sick and the wounded in the war could recuperate, get fed and clothed so they could fight another day. We have heard of such people who furtively collaborated in the efforts of freedom fighters. They did this despite knowing the great danger and risk to their own lives and well being.

War brings out the worst in people. There are some who'd refuse to come to the aid of others for fear that they'd suffer if they chose to do otherwise. We have heard of how wounded soldiers were turned away by ungenerous civilians who refused to help them with food and temporary shelter. Even worse, some of these horrible people even reported to oppressing soldiers the whereabouts of freedom fighters. Such cruel people deserve to be thrown in burning flames for their traitorous behavior and selfishness. They might only have been protecting their own family. But there could have been a better way of doing so other than betraying those willing enough to sacrifice their own lives and safety for the good of all.

My country's history during the war contains accounts of such traitorousness. There existed people who aided and abetted invading soldiers in locating secret rebel soldiers or those found to be propagating rebellious ideas and perspectives. Maybe those people were just acting in the best interest of their family and themselves. But they needn't have to blatantly demonstrate their cowardice and sheer stupidity by putting their fellowmen in grave danger. They could have kept quiet.

Yes, war brings out the best and the worst in people. If war broke out today, who is to say how we'll all turn out to be? The best fighters or the worst traitors? Nobody knows, really.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. What are the best acts of heroism during a war? How about the worst? Be as specific as you need.
2. Why is it difficult to rise up to the occasion by being brave during a war?
3. Do you think another world war could erupt in the future? Why or why not?
4. Why do we stand to lose so much during a war?
5. Would you choose to be a soldier for your country during war or just escape to a foreign country for safety? Why?



OF THE WARS WE FIGHT IN OUR LIVES

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We fight our own wars everyday.

Many of us wage wars between choosing to live well and choosing to live badly. There are many of us who fight daily battles with their particular circumstances in life. There could be those who need to fight for their lives because they are afflicted with sickness or disease. There could be those fighting to stay alive as they battle terminal illnesses. Finding the strength to wake up each day and face another chapter of one's life takes a huge amount of courage and faith. Most of us love life, so we can just imagine how those who are not so blessed readily feel hopelessness and despair.

There are those of us who wage battles in the workplace. There are those among us who battle oppression through gender or racial discrimination, those who find that their qualifications and skills are constantly being put into question, those who find that their daily job requires a whole lot more than their completed education and experience. These are the kind of people who look at the workplace as a battlefield. And what about those who need to wield their swords in the boardroom in order to keep the company afloat? Those who have to prove that their companies are way better than others? It can be difficult for business owners to have to fight their way to establish their brands. The battle is more manageable for small business owners, but it can be difficult to create a reputation and become recognized for what sets a business apart from the competition.

Then there are those among us who wage a battle within our very own families. By battle we do not speak here of dysfunctional family relationships, although these do exist. We might be enjoying normal family lives, but the daily challenges of keeping our families fed, clothed and supported could be a war that we need to win everyday. With the steady rise of costs of living, many families out there in my own country have to subsist on a dollar a day-maybe even less- to get by. It can be hard to imagine how people can live in such miserable conditions but it's true; many in my country have to wage everyday battles with hunger, poor nutrition and just survival. Sadly, survival has become more complex everyday.

And there are those among us who struggle to be recognized for what we are. It can be challenging to establish an identity, but we've been at it since we were students. Now, as we wage bigger wars in our adulthood, let us remember the lessons of wars fought, won over or lost in the past. The battle is frequently uphill, but the horizons always prove to be reachable and motivating.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Be bale to talk about the wars you fight in your own life. Share your experiences.
2. What valuable lessons have you learned from fighting your own wars in life? Be as specific as needed.
3. How will you teach your own future children about life and living?
4. How can you become a better fighter in life? Elaborate on your answer/s.
5. What are the "weapons" we can use in fighting our battles in life?



War: The byproduct of man's intolerance and belief

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War is a byproduct of man's greed and intolerance. It is created in order to satisfy man's need for domination and conquest. Wars have many faces. Most leaders use religious beliefs in order to rouse the masses to start wars. Freedom fighters utilize the concept of freedom and liberty against a formidable tyrant. They preach the concept of freedom against tyrannical rule and the masses are urged to revolt. Others use the concept of abundance, riches, glory, fame, disease and respect in order to urge others to fight.

The problem with war is that it is often uncontrollable, like the fire. Once a wild fire erupts, it is quite challenging to control it. It spreads and it devours everything in sight. In a couple of hours or days, everything turns into crumbling embers.

Today, the concept of war can be classified according to how they are waged. There is psychological war, like terrorism, which utilizes fear and panic in order to destroy colonies. There is economic war, which is based on attacking the enemy's resources in order to deplete its forces. There are weapons based on biological weapons, like viruses, and there are weapons created for total destruction, just like a nuclear bomb. Regardless of the type of weapon and strategy used the end is still the same. There will always be damage on both sides.

For the past couple of centuries, famous wars started because of pride and vanity. Adolf Hitler started his campaign due to religious preferences, yet it was his own bigotry that sealed his fate. Julius Cesar and Alexander the Great believed in conquest and power. They ruled half of the world because of their strong lust for power. Napoleon Bonaparte used the concept of glory.

Most leaders today also start wars because of their bigotry and greed. They believe that the only way to attain freedom and to be able to prevent economic downfall is through the use of wars. Yet, they forget that wars are expensive. Soldiers need to eat and they will need fuel for their weapons of destruction. That is why rather than earning, they lose more because of their petty quarrels. The biggest downside during wars is that there will always be casualties and citizens are always affected. People will need to pay more taxes and work for the good of the society. This concept of socialism and communism is still applied today.

Of course, war is not only based on death and destruction. It can also be used for good, just like in money and with guns. It can be used to unify the public or to improve the quality of life. However, as long as there are still people who are intolerant to others then war will always be destructive.

Questions:

- 1) What is war?
- 2) Why is war a bad thing?
- 3) How can war be used for good?
- 4) Do you think that war is bad or good? Why?
- 5) What happens in a war?



WAR - AGAINST HUMAN NATURE

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War is definitely against human nature. People do not want to wage war against each other for it is not one's nature to do so. All human beings would want to live in peace and harmony with one another. People do not just flare up spontaneously, but sometimes it is deliberately started by the governments by means of propaganda and brainwashing. Even the soldiers at war don't want to kill other people because it is against their nature. The ones who really perform the killing during the war are those crazed individuals.

Of course when people try to attack you, your natural reaction would be to fight back. In fact, no one wants to attack anybody, especially when there is no reason at all to do this. The governments are the ones attacking other governments and they are actually using the people. There are a lot of times and instances when war become necessary. When people try and suppress another person's way of life or when people try to exterminate a group of people, then these are the times when war should be fought.

If we try to take a look at the countries that have waged war with other countries, we would figure out that the United States has been the most successful in war. Then it is consequential to say that the United States has very powerful militia and armaments. Take for example during the Cold War era, the United States feared the spread of communism and that only means that they have to protect their interests. What more at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, when the US carried on several military interventions in what became known as the "Banana Wars." They are guarding their interest on the intervention and preservation of their commercial interests.

I think every country would always guard and work to the best of their interest and this is the sole reason why they wage war on other countries. Not until they are assured of safeguarding their perimeters would they be at peace with their neighboring countries. Like the United States, we would always like to have good relations with the people and the countries that surround us. I also think that when one imposes their will on others, then most likely, there will be discrepancies and an outbreak, as an outcome of the said action. Apparently, I think everyone will agree to what Hull once said, "No country has the right to intervene in the internal or external affairs of another."

Who wants to be involved with war anyway? All human beings want to live peacefully here on earth and so we can say that war is against our human nature, after all we wanted were just to have everything here on earth to end well.

Questions for discussion:

1. Is war the last option for people to iron out their differences? Explain your answer.
2. Would you agree that war is against the human nature? Why or why not?
3. Do you think imposing one's will can create chaos in your environment and dealings with other people? Justify your answer.
4. How would you face people who are always violent? Do you think they have that tendency to wage war with others too?
5. Do you agree that war makes people and nations feel indifferent with one another? Explain your answer.



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