

***Soldier's Heart* by Gary Paulsen** (Published by Dell Laurel-Leaf, 1998)

Approved for use in Communication Arts, Grade 7

Summary

Gary Paulsen's moving story is based on factual accounts from diaries of a young man who joins the Union Army seeking adventure. He fights in three of the major Civil War battles, finding that war lacks the glamour he sought. He becomes jaded beyond his years, is eventually wounded, and later dies from a combination of his battle wounds and "soldier's heart" – the Civil War term for post traumatic stress syndrome.

Connection to the Curriculum

This short, high-interest book can be used to teach theme, character development, conflict and conflict resolution, and plot analysis. It also serves as a good example of historic literature in conjunction with the social studies curriculum

Standards

Course Objectives (Benchmarks)

Reading: 1.4- The students comprehend a variety of texts.

Literature: 2.1- The students use literary concepts to interpret and respond to text.

Possible Skills Taught (Indicators)

Reading:

1.4.10- The student identifies characteristics or narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.15- The student uses information from the text to make inferences and draw conclusions.

1.4.16- The student analyzes how text structure (sequence, problem-solution, comparison-contrast, description, cause-effect) help support comprehension of text.

1.4.17- The student compares and contrasts varying aspects (characters' traits and motives, themes, problem-solution, cause-effect relationships, ideas and concepts, procedures, viewpoints) in one or more appropriate-level texts.

1.4.18- The student explains cause-effect relationships in appropriate-level narrative, expository, technical, and persuasive texts.

1.4.19- The student uses paraphrasing and organizational skills to summarize information (stated and implied main ideas, main events, important details) from appropriate-level narrative, expository, persuasive, and technical texts in logical order.

1.4.20- The student identifies the topic, main idea(s), supporting details, and theme(s) in text across the content areas and from a variety of sources in appropriate-level text.

Literature:

2.1.1- The student describes different aspects of characters (e.g., their physical traits, personality traits, feelings, actions, motives) and analyzes how major characters are developed (through their thoughts, words, speech patterns, actions) and how they change over time.

2.1.2- The student identifies and describes the setting (e.g., environment, time of day or year, historical period, situation, place) and analyzes connections between the setting and other story elements (e.g., character, plot).

A Note on the Text

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

Paulsen's realistic tale of war includes war violence; although the violence is presented subtly, it is still a disturbing reality (such as killing horses to feed the wounded or dealing with battle injuries). The main character is disillusioned by the war and eventually dies of battle fatigue.

Additional Unit Design Connections

Coming soon:

To be completed during future curriculum development activities