

Approaching the Teaching of War in the Elementary Classroom with Text Sets

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War is defined as “a state of usually open and declared armed hostile conflict between states or nations.”¹ Whether in active conflict, entering war, or reeling from the aftermath, families and communities around the world are directly or indirectly affected by war and its far-reaching effects. War shapes the physical geography of communities as well as the culture, economy, government, history, and overall identity of a region; no doubt this shaping affects the individuals and families who live there presently and in generations to come. In this article, we aim to help readers think about how to teach war with children in ways that directly address the incredibly complex systems involved. Our primary focus is to illustrate how a set of picture books, coupled with structured discussion, might be used with young learners to center the complexities of the human experience in times of conflict. Specifically, we aim to elevate the indelible humanity enmeshed in war rather than teach specific content knowledge of war while decentering the dominant narratives of war.

The grade level placement of the curriculum described below will vary greatly based on teachers’ contexts. While state standards differ in the placement of war in the social studies curriculum, we urge teachers to first and foremost develop any teaching of war from the relationships they have with the children in their classrooms.² As an example, the most recent North Carolina state social studies standards encourage children to learn about the “changing roles of women, indigenous, racial and other minority groups in the United States,” and the state’s curricular support documents list World War II, the Civil War, and the American Revolution as example topics to explore this particular objective.³ Addressing war in the elementary classroom is inevitable as the teaching of historical events will likely approach conversations about conflict. We suggest the curriculum outlined herein is a good fit for grades 4–5. This article has four sections: an overview of what

we know about teaching war in K-5 presently; war and human rights; a guide to situating war in the elementary social studies curriculum; and an overview of selecting texts for a thematic text set on teaching war and its effects with young children.

Overview of Teaching War at the Elementary Level

Difficult knowledge around the teaching of war is mostly absent at the elementary level;⁴ when it is taught, lessons tend to sterilize its grimy and violent realities that might elicit feelings of grief and despair, and focus instead on ideas such as patriotism and military service that stir up feelings of pride and longing. Though curricular standards are peppered with historical content involving specific wars, the notion of *conflict* as it relates to *humanity* is mostly left untouched. Moreover, there is a clear need for preparing elementary teachers to teach war from a critical stance, and cultivating the agency needed to do so in elementary classrooms.⁵ The purpose for studying war in this context is to examine what happens *as a result* of the war, not the causes of the conflict or the brutal realities suffered at battle.⁶ Rarely do we ask our youngest learners to consider the costs of war specific to the lives of those directly and indirectly impacted by conflict, and whether or not those costs are justified. Two articles published in *Social Studies and the Young Learner* in 2021 describe the use of children’s literature in the elementary classroom as a springboard to teach the difficult knowledge of war.⁷ In her first piece, the author provides an overview of how to use two children’s books to teach the Korean War from a critical stance, including the difficult knowledge of the impact of war on various groups. In her second article, readers learn about the comprehensive use of one title to teach the lesser written-about war in the Philippines during World War II.

To supplement these curricular realities, we turn to the Social Justice Standards which are anchored by the four domains of identity, diversity, justice, and action.⁸ This compilation of Social Justice Standards aims to help children understand stories as part of identity, including the stories of individuals and families impacted by war. Sample standards that go beyond superficial teaching in the context of war and conflict include “I want to know about other people and how our lives and experiences are the same and different”;⁹ “I know some true stories about how people have been treated badly because of their group identities, and I don’t like it”;¹⁰ “I care about those who are treated unfairly.”¹¹ Educators can use this collection of standards as a framework for selecting meaningful children’s literature that highlights stories about war, conflict, human rights, and the refugee experience.

Though we are encouraged by the efforts of Learning for Justice, we recognize in the larger field of elementary social studies the lack of resources available for teaching war-related content with young learners. In addition to revealing a curricular need, this dearth of resources also gives us pause as we consider reasons why there is not a greater demand for resources for teaching war at the elementary level. Moreover, we recognize that war is a difficult topic, and as such, becomes taboo or controversial,¹² and eventually, sidelined in the curriculum.

War as a “Controversial” Topic

We argue for the teaching of controversial topics in elementary school as a way to promote social justice and believe the field of social studies has the potential to take on the struggle towards justice.¹³ Elementary scholars have for decades researched the perceptions and behaviors of elementary teachers around teaching controversial topics.¹⁴ Themes of avoidance, worry about content being developmentally appropriate, and fear of offending regularly surface in research with teachers and teacher candidates.¹⁵ While some scholars have written about teaching aspects of war in the elementary grades through a justice lens,¹⁶ less is known about teacher and teacher candidates’ perceptions of teaching war with elementary students.

The avoidance of topics considered to be taboo or controversial only models a departure from actual events that affect real people. We lean on the scholarship of bell hooks who noted,

When we teach our students that there is safety in learning to cope with conflict, with differences of thought and opinion, we prepare their minds for radical openness. We teach them that it is possible to learn in diverse settings. And in the long run, by teaching students to value dissent and to

treasure critical exchange, we prepare them to face reality.¹⁷

The topic of war is ripe for taking up learning about cope and conflict, about reality, and therefore can position students’ minds for *radical openness*. A recent study highlighting work with third graders as they critically analyzed immigration policy via the use of multicultural children’s literature reveals the possibilities for purposeful integration of social studies and ELA.¹⁸ Preparing for radical openness as it relates to the teaching of war calls for prerequisite relationships with students and deep understandings of students’ identities and experiences with the multiple aspects of war in order to develop appropriate questions and ways to approach and engage in discussion about the topic.

We acknowledge the importance of teaching difficult knowledge in order to counter typical dominant narratives that avoid honest conversation about the causes and consequences of war,¹⁹ and we also recognize the teaching of difficult knowledge can cause learning to be experienced as a burden.²⁰ Using children’s literature to support the teaching of difficult knowledge can simultaneously promote thoughtful integration of ELA and social studies in the elementary grades,²¹ as well as serve as an entry point for disrupting dominant, incomplete historical understandings of war.²² Therefore, our purpose in writing this article is twofold: to encourage the critical teaching of war to 1) prepare students to face reality with radical openness, by which we mean valuing dissent and treasuring critical exchange;²³ and 2) use children’s literature as a vehicle to develop a more critical understanding of citizenship as it relates to studying war.

Resources (and Gaps) for Teaching War with Young Learners

War as a theme in children’s chapter books is fairly common, particularly among historical fiction titles. Powerful titles such as *Number the Stars* (1989), *The War that Saved my Life* (2015), and *Refugee* (2017) have been used widely in elementary and middle grades classrooms as students meet standards for history and conflict in social studies or study personal narratives in ELA standards. As is common in elementary planning, content areas are often integrated into the ELA block and many novel guides for titles with war as a theme provide guidance for extending social studies by using the novel as a springboard. While many older titles include narratives of World War II, and particularly narratives related to the WWII Holocaust,²⁴ only recently have we seen an uptick in historical fiction chapter books that explore experiences of refugees fleeing war (e.g., *Other Words for Home*) and the impact of the movement on families over time (e.g., *Butterfly Yellow*,

Inside Out and Back Again). While there are many children's books related to personal narratives on war and impacts on families, gaps do exist in what perspectives on war are presented, the percentage of books about world wars compared to civil war conflicts, and the omission of particular times of war. Practitioner articles on teaching war at the elementary level are mostly focused on the American Civil War and the major World Wars, and there are few materials available that focus specifically on the Vietnam and Korean Wars, or conflicts occurring in the last several decades. Moreover, there is a trend in elementary social studies of using simulations to examine war and related decision making, including push-and-pull factors such as migration theory. As scholarship has explained, simulations should not be used to examine the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups,²⁵ which includes anyone fleeing danger within or beyond internal borders.²⁶ Instead, more accurate and hopeful narratives of war should include various perspectives including acts of resistance, actions of groups typically marginalized in the curriculum, and the effects on children during times of war.

War in the Context of Human Rights

The Declaration of the Rights of a Child, which was unanimously adopted by the United Nations in 1959, helps contextualize the idea of human rights with children. Children learn about civil rights and responsibilities under the umbrella of civic education, but human rights should also be a topic of study when discussing war. It is important for students to be able to understand how human rights are most often violated on a large scale during times of war. Teachers can also position the concept of human rights within the real context of war.

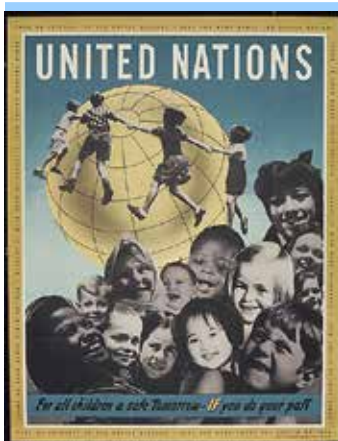
While many titles addressing war that are used in the elementary classroom involve the American Revolution, the United States' Civil War, or World War II, we urge

teachers to look at more recent and even current conflicts when teaching war with young learners. Although there may be less instructional materials for children on recent and current conflicts, children's titles that illustrate human rights can be used to walk through recent or current events in order to identify violations of human rights and push-and-pull factors related to human rights. Organizations like Amnesty International provide information on current events related to human rights, and others like UNESCO and UNICEF have developed instructional materials for elementary classrooms for unpacking human rights, including violations of rights in wartime. These resources can be used alongside carefully selected children's literature to plan class discussions and other learning experiences around war.

Situating War in the Elementary Classroom Curriculum

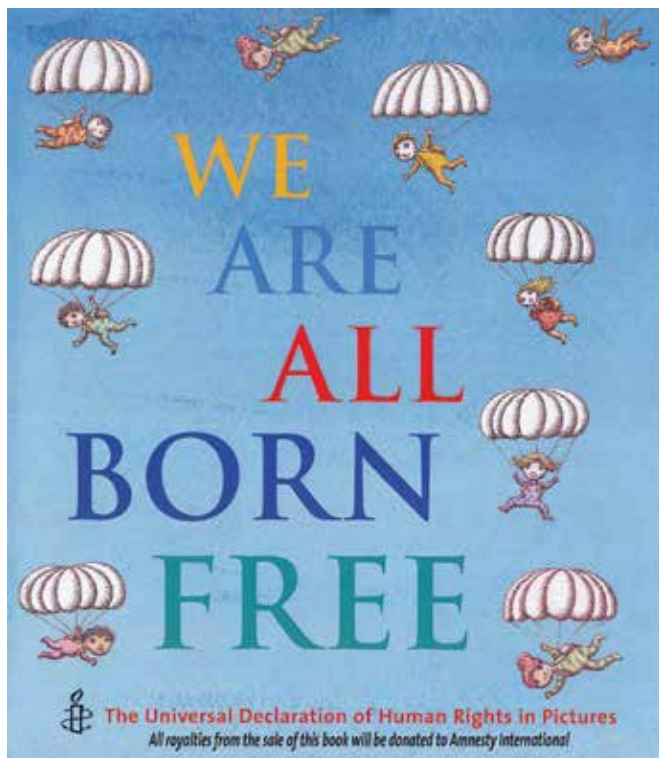
Broadly speaking, the concept of war can be taught in geography, economics, culture, and government. The resulting push-and-pull factors of war can be meaningfully included in the theme of movement in geography, and in history, citizenship, and culture.

Organizations like Learning for Justice and Rethinking Schools often provide online resources for teaching current content related to war. Situating specific conflict events within instruction focused on current events is one strategy for teaching contemporary examples of war. Tadayuki Suzuki et al. have contributed scholarship that has highlighted how to use picture books to teach about the social effects of war and conflict,²⁷ which expands on the notion of culturally responsive teaching.²⁸ Personal narratives connected to war are also an opportunity to teach both mirrors and windows,²⁹ and children's literature offers a number of mirrors and windows on war. Mirrors are narratives that the reader can identify closely with, narratives that read much like the reader's own lived experience. Windows are narratives that provide a different viewpoint or viewpoints and expand the reader's understanding of the variety of lived experiences across humans. In the context of personal narratives related to war, mirrors might be narratives that a child affected directly by war can relate to; that same narrative becomes a window to a child who has not been directly affected by war. Whether the illustrated experience depicts deployment, experiences stateside, fleeing civil war, or navigating a new normal in a new place, narratives on war can be an opportunity to affirm a child's lived experiences or help students understand the variety of experiences across humans that result from war.



United Nations poster
"For All Children a Safe
Tomorrow If You Do Your
Part," 1942-1945

National Archives, photo no. 515900



Four Steps for Creating an Elementary Text Set Focused on War

In their 2015 article in *Social Studies Research and Practice*, Tschida and Buchanan described a multistep process for developing a themed text set for teaching a controversial or difficult issue.³⁰ Their four steps included: identify the big idea, identify multiple perspectives on the big idea, locate qualifying texts from the variety of texts available, and select the texts to be used in the set. Given the public dialogue around war and the complexities of the causes and impacts, war is often not addressed in elementary curriculum until fourth and fifth grade and is considered a difficult issue. In the following section, we use Tschida and Buchanan's process in describing a themed text set on teaching war with young learners. We selected this model for two reasons: it provides a concrete approach to developing thematic text sets, and it underscores the need for carefully selecting the texts used to broach controversial or difficult content with young learners.

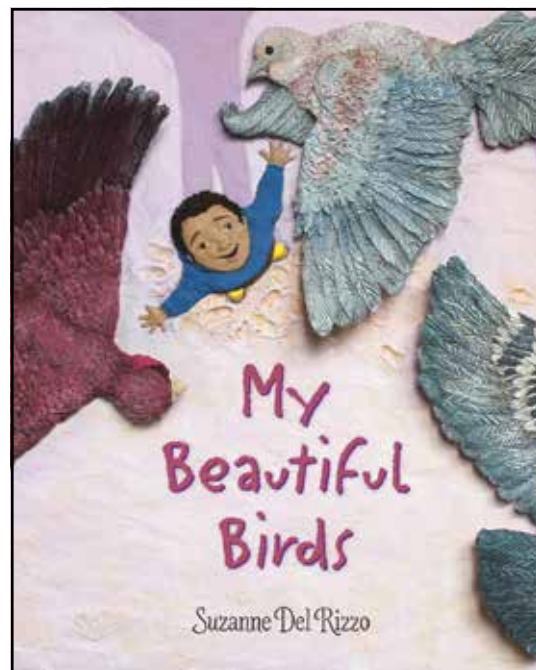
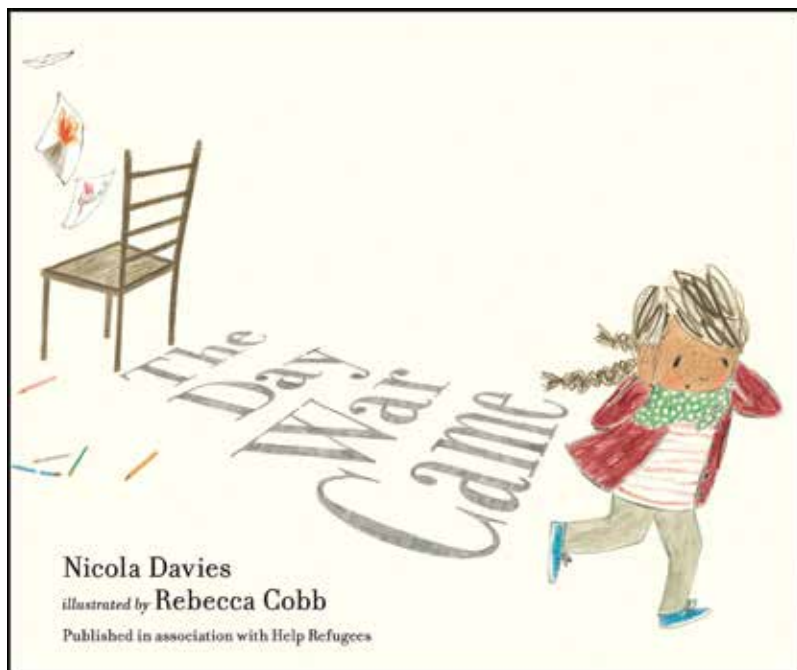
Step 1: Identify the Big Idea: War

Creating a themed text set begins with identifying the big idea or ideas you intend to examine through the texts you select. Many big ideas fall under the umbrella of war, and are potential ideas to examine in a themed text set. Beginning a study of past or current conflicts with the causes of war can help situate the larger study as students progress through a unit on war. Causes of war might include intolerance of cultural norms, disputes over land or other property, religious intolerance, and

violations of human rights. The push-and-pull factors of war, particularly as they differ by group, are an important big idea to unpack with children. Looking at the push-and-pull factors for opposing groups is a tremendous opportunity for exercising perspective recognition and identifying underrepresented perspectives.

Making decisions about what causes to delve into, just like any decision teachers make in the midst of teaching difficult topics, requires a keen understanding of the multiple identities represented in the classroom as well as understanding students' experiences with war. We recommend a routine of class meetings as critical pedagogy³¹ to support the learning of controversial issues as well as to strengthen and sustain empathetic relationships that aid the teacher in curriculum decision-making. When building relationships in the classroom, particular experiences and perspectives will be revealed and should be taken into consideration when deciding how to approach the topic of war (i.e., students who have been directly impacted by war). This includes the process of text selection and discussion questions used. A simple writing (or drawing) activity before delving into a concept like war can inform the teacher of previous experiences, misconceptions, and understandings students bring to the classroom, prompted by questions such as: 1) What do you know about war and/or the military? 2) How have you or someone you know experienced war? 3) What are some questions you have about war?

The effects of war create a multilayered and far-reaching big idea. Whether examining the role of involuntary movement (e.g., internally displaced, international refugees) or the separation or reunification of families, the effects of war are often detached from understanding without a relatable connection. Children's literature provides an opportunity for relating to a character, and in the children's literature about war, we most commonly see texts that address the effects of war on people and people's stories. We know that the right children's literature, when placed in their hands at the right time, "can make an important impact in developing children's worldview."³² Whether impending conflict or present, fear is one effect of war. How individuals and groups respond to war and fear is largely dependent on what is both clearly in danger and possibly in danger. We believe that the impact of fear on children and their families is especially important to address in a study of war. Given that push-and-pull factors of war often engender fear (e.g., fleeing your home without a certain path to safety), teachers should develop instruction that helps students recognize how push-and-pull factors contribute to certain emotions, including fear. We believe it is incredibly important to elevate conflict resolution and peace within the context and teaching of war. War does not stand



alone, separate from peace or conflict resolution, and as such, we prioritize both in the work that follows.

Step 2: Identifying Multiple Perspectives on War

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of public dialogues surrounding contentious topics is the lack of multiple perspectives on the issue. This is true for the teaching of war, peace, and conflict resolution. The second step involves identifying various perspectives to build a more complete story.³³ In this step, we outline five themes related to conflict that can expand the narrative of war for children, and include books that can be used to teach via the five themes. See step 4 for brief descriptions of how to use the other tables.

Strength and kindness in times of war and in peace.

One consistent theme among books with perspectives on war is the theme of strength and kindness in times of war and peace. Suzuki et al. describe in their analysis of teaching war using picture books the themes of resiliency and protection of innocence.³⁴ Many children's books on war echo these themes and depict individuals, families, or groups who demonstrate incredible strength or kindness to others.

Hope. Suzuki et al. wrote, "Hope after conflict shows the futility of war and demonstrates humanity's resilience."³⁵ In an analysis of children's books that teach about 9/11 and its aftermath, many books were found to offer *symbols of hope and resilience*.³⁶ We found this to be true in examining a broader number of children's books on teaching war, as well as books that present human rights as a source of hope (e.g., *Dreams of Freedom*).

Others depict the role of hope during large scale times of war and center the goodness of people in the storyline.

Deployment. While it may seem obvious that those who are deployed during a time of war are affected significantly, the effects of deployment on families waiting for their return, as well as the effects of their loved one's return, are considerably underrepresented in children's literature.

Family unit separation. One impact of war on family units, particularly when families are forced to flee danger, is family unit separation. In order for children to have a deeper understanding of how war affects individuals and groups of people, family unit separation should be taught as part of a study of war, and examples of how families coped with and even developed solutions should be included. This is a particularly salient point when looking at the push-and-pull factors that influence how individuals and groups navigate war.

Loss. At the most basic level, war results in intangible and tangible loss. Intangible loss includes loss of emotional and physical connection (e.g., children unable to share emotionally and physically with a loved one), loss of experiences (e.g., a parent witnessing a child's milestones, education), and loss of a sense of security/safety. Tangible losses include financial stability and means, material goods, keepsakes, and shelter. Many books that narrate refugee experiences highlight tangible losses and basic human rights that are tangible (e.g., shelter) and intangible (i.e., safety), however children's titles that illustrate the losses associated with war with non-refugee characters are less available. Teachers have the opportunity in a study of war and conflict to focus on

multiple perspectives of war. Planning a unit of instruction that includes picture book representations of loss, family unit separation, deployment, and the kindness of others, in conjunction with thoughtful compelling questions for inquiry during the unit, is a solid starting place. In the next section we discuss the process for locating qualifying texts that represent multiple themes and perspectives on war.

Step 3: Locate Qualifying Texts

A number of excellent curriculum-focused organizations offer insight on developing war-themed instruction in K-12. Both Rethinking Schools and Learning for Justice provide support for teachers who wish to examine current events related to conflict and war but lack instructional materials, especially those about more recent events. Echoes and Reflections, while specific to Holocaust instruction, provides nine solid principles that can be translated to many experiences related to war. The equity focused website WeNeedDiverseBooks.org offers hyperlinked lists of sites to find a more diverse selection of books, and AMightyGirl.com provides suggestions of 312 texts that center war and conflict. We suggest locating materials from these organizations to supplement the titles we describe. Building on Tschida and Buchanan's directions for compiling a themed text set,³⁷ we recommend focusing on three areas when selecting titles for teaching war with young learners: a list of minimal qualifiers, considerations for how the text is best situated

books can serve as mentor texts to aid students in writing or can be used as read-aloud texts to spark class discussion or prompt an inquiry or activity.

in the classroom, and ways the text addresses a series of guiding questions specific to war.

There are a number of ways that actual printed texts can be incorporated into instruction with children. The reading level, complexity of content, and amount of time available for instruction all influence how a printed text is used in the classroom. The whole class read aloud, independent reading, and small group guided instruction are all opportunities as well as the extent that a text will be used (i.e., once in whole, repeatedly in whole, in part). For example, books can serve as mentor texts to aid students in writing or can be used as read-aloud texts to spark class discussion or prompt an inquiry or activity. When selecting texts, teachers should examine the quality of the story in order to consider whether the text will hold students' attention while also supporting the inquiry process. Additionally, the accuracy of the historical and social studies content in the text should be verified and easily supported with secondary or supple-

Table 1. Suggested Books for Teaching the Five Themes of War

Theme	Suggested Books
Strength and kindness in times of war and in peace	Examples include acts of kindness across opposing sides (e.g., <i>Pink and Say</i>), a number of titles about the WWII holocaust where helpers contributed to the safety of a family (e.g., <i>I Will Come Back for You: A Family in Hiding During World War II</i>) and upstanders during the early stages of Nazi regime (<i>The Passage to Freedom</i>).
Hope	Books that center hope also include stories of involuntary movement, such as <i>Oscar and the Eight Blessings</i> , a story of hope during the terror of kristallnacht, and <i>Four Feet, Two Sandals</i> , which demonstrates hope in times of loss and uncertainty, both common to the involuntary movement of refugees.
Deployment	Few books are available that address the toll of deployment on children (<i>Night Catch, Stars Above Us</i>) and within those titles, deployment at a time of conflict is even less represented.
Family Unit Separation	Titles like <i>Going Home, Coming Home</i> , and <i>Crossing the Farak River</i> provide insight into the experiences of families who were forced to separate during war.
Loss	Titles such as <i>The Goodbye Book</i> , <i>The Invisible String</i> , and <i>The Scar</i> can help children understand and cope with death and grief, though not in the context of war. Similarly, there is a dearth of nonfiction titles that explain the tangible and intangible losses and overall impacts on individuals, families, groups, and communities affected by war.

mental resources. Finally, the text set should represent multiple perspectives and view conflict and resolution from multiple angles.

Allowing students to ask questions to guide an inquiry about war is an appropriate place to start, and we also encourage teachers to consider the following compelling questions, based on our examination of standards and children’s books: *What human rights were violated (abused?) during the events in this book? In what ways did the people feel pushed out? In what ways did the people feel welcome and safe? How do people’s stories help us understand the complexities of war?*

Step 4: Select Texts for the Text Set

The children’s books for the text set in Tables 2 and 3 were selected based on the listed themes and contribution to our purposes for teaching about war. Here we present children’s books as well as connections to children’s rights. Using the book *We Are All Born Free* as an anchor text, we hope to give young children a sense of morality free from religious influence. This text is a strong anchor text for the

overall set as it lays out a basic lesson on human rights, which then allows teachers to connect the complexities of war back to a more concrete framework for human rights. In Tables 2 and 3, we highlight the themes of human rights, the refugee experience, and peace to complement the list of suggested books for teaching the five themes of war. Table 2 lists the theme and contribution each book makes to the set, while Table 3 provides descriptions of each book, and accompanying guiding questions.

Conclusion

Our hope in writing this article was to encourage the inclusion of difficult topics, such as war, in the elementary curriculum so that young children are prepared to face reality with radical openness and come away with a more critical understanding of citizenship as it relates to war. We recognize the difficult knowledge of war, and the heavy task before teachers of “curating and balancing horror and hope” when approaching the teaching of war.³⁸ Using Learning for Justice’s Social Justice Standards along with the nine-title picture book text set

Table 2. Elementary Trade Books Integrating War, Human Rights, and Refugee Experiences

Title (Grade Level)	Theme(s)	Contribution to the Text Set
<i>We Are All Born Free</i> (K-2)	human rights	Strong overview of rights related to war.
<i>The People Shall Continue</i> (2–4)	human and Indigenous rights; tangible and intangible loss; hope and resilience	Accurate representation of Indigenous experience during ongoing invasion of Native lands and the continual resilience of Native tribes and people in North America.
<i>The Journey</i> (K-2)	realities of war (e.g., fear); tangible and intangible loss; push-and-pull factors; refugee experience	Accurate representation of the refugee experience from the child’s perspective; single parent fleeing with two children.
<i>The Day War Came</i> (K-4)	realities of war; refugee experience; tangible and intangible loss; hope and resilience	Accurate representation of the refugee experience from the child’s perspective; highlights discrimination and acceptance.
<i>My Beautiful Birds</i> (K-4)	realities of war; refugee experience; tangible and intangible loss; hope and resilience	Accurate portrayal of a Syrian refugee family as they adjust to life in a refugee camp.
<i>From Far Away</i> (K-3)	displacement, navigating cultural and regional routines and practices, hope and resilience	Narrative from a refugee perspective displaced in Canada and the lesser-recognized difficulties of displacement. Based on the true story of Saoussan Askar and Robert Munsch.
<i>The Whispering Cloth</i> (K-2)	Hmong people; tangible and intangible loss; push-and-pull factors	Actual photos of a Hmong story cloth that retells the story of a young Hmong girl who lost her parents.
<i>Wherever I Go</i> (1–4)	extended experience in a refugee camp; childhood	For many families, the time in a refugee camp is extended; this book recognizes this while also highlighting Abia’s context of childhood.
<i>Peace is an Offering</i> (K-2)	conflict resolution; peace; tangible and intangible loss; hope and resilience	Expresses the idea of peace through different positive interactions with others.

Note. These nine selections offer one example of a text set on this topic.

Table 3. Text Set for Teaching War

Title	Description	Guiding Questions
<i>We Are All Born Free</i>	This beautifully illustrated book expresses the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in pictures. Each two-page spread is dedicated to one article in the declaration, so readers can gaze at an artist's interpretation of the article while also reading its text. The 30 articles are listed at the end of the book, along with photos of each contributing artist.	What human rights are often violated in time of war? How can individuals recognize unfair treatment and act to help others?
<i>The People Shall Continue</i>	While most titles about displacement narrate stories of individuals or families who were forced across international borders, this poem by Indigenous poet Simon Ortiz, published as a picture book, narrates the atrocities of Indigenous displacement within internal North American borders and highlights the resilience of Indigenous tribes and people over time. <i>*We suggest the 2017 reprint.</i>	How does this book expand your understanding of Indigenous experiences? What do you know about internal displacement? In what ways have Native and Indigenous tribes and people demonstrated resilience during times of tangible and intangible loss? What sovereign Indigenous rights have been violated in North America?
<i>The Journey</i>	<i>The Journey</i> is a solemn book that follows a mother and her two children, through the perspective of one of the children, on their journey to flee a war-torn country. The book has no resolution or destination point, as the family continues their journey through the last page. The book highlights border crossing, being turned away, and border walls, which the author describes can only be ignored by birds.	In what ways do physical and societal borders impact a family's opportunity for movement? How are the experiences of refugees fleeing war similar and different from voluntary movement?
<i>The Day War Came</i>	This book can be emotional to read as a young girl loses her entire family because of war. She flees and tries to find a safe place where she might be welcome but is turned away, even from school. The book showcases instances of discrimination as a product of war but ends with upstander behaviors that resolve the story with a feeling of hope.	Why is this story important? What is the role of hope in understanding injustices like those described here?
<i>My Beautiful Birds</i>	<i>My Beautiful Birds</i> can help children understand the refugee experience, as it portrays a family fleeing a war-torn Syria. The book highlights how child refugees might feel tangible and intangible loss, and how material things (in this case, pet birds), can provide comfort. Though Sami had to flee without his precious birds, he finds feelings of safety through his interaction with other birds. The author adds unique texture to the story with beautiful illustrations of clay and other mixed media.	How might war result in tangible or intangible loss? What new perspectives have you gained from this text?
<i>From Far Away</i>	This book includes the experience of navigating school after displacement following war. Based on the true story of letters exchanged between Saoussan Askar and Robert Munsch, this book includes letter writing to aid the reader in understanding Saoussan's experiences. <i>*We suggest the 2017 reprint which includes a note to readers from Saoussan.</i>	What does it mean to be displaced? What every day routines might be harder to navigate at first when entering a new school in a new place? How did Saoussan exemplify resistance?
<i>The Whispering Cloth</i>	<i>The Whispering Cloth</i> is the story of a young Hmong girl refugee who has lost her parents. Her grandmother teaches her how to stitch traditional Hmong story cloths, and she eventually decides to create her own story cloth to depict the story of her family. Images include watercolor illustrations as well as photographs of an actual Hmong story cloth. The book includes a glossary of Hmong terms used in the story.	What do we know about the importance of stories, traditions, and families? How does this story share diverse perspectives on loss, family unit separation, and hope? How has this title expanded what you understand about family unit separation as a result of war?
<i>Wherever I Go</i>	The concept of a "forever home" is introduced in this story of one family's 7+ year experience at a refugee camp. The paintings draw the reader in, highlighting the likenesses and differences between Abia, an Ethiopian child, and children around the world while also offering a realistic portrayal of refugee experiences.	What connections can you make to Abia? What surprised you about Abia's story? What questions do you have after reading this book?
<i>Peace is an Offering</i>	This bilingual (English and Spanish) investigation of the word <i>peace</i> highlights different actions to offer peace. Subtle references to human rights and conflict are sprinkled throughout. For example, in reference to the attacks on 9/11, one page depicts a mother and her children looking at the New York City skyline: "And even in the wake of tragedy, Even then, you might find her. In the rubble of a fallen tower. In the sorrow of your darkest hour. In the hat of a hero. In the loss of a friend." The page's imagery coupled with the text helps the reader infer that a life was lost. The book promotes peace, harmony, and kindness.	What do we know about hope in times of sorrow and tragedy? What can we learn from historical and contemporary examples of times of peace and times of war?

described in Tables 2 and 3 as one idea, we hope readers can approach the teaching of war with similar aims. Studying war and its effects at the elementary level can help our youngest learners towards empathy and social understanding, which should be the beating heart of a social studies curriculum. ■

Children's Literature

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- Ortiz, Simon J. *The People Shall Continue*. Illustrated by Sharol Graves. New York: Children's Book Press: Lee and Low, 2017.
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Notes

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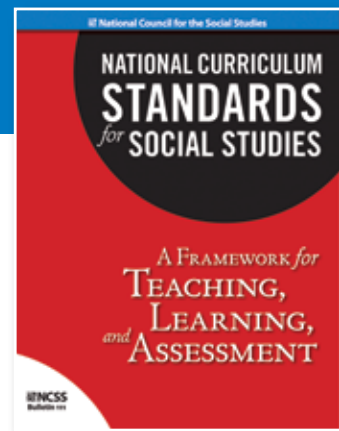
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