

The Battle of Jericho

By Sharon Draper

Summer Reading Project

2010-2011

Sophomores

Overview:

Sharon Draper's The Battle of Jericho is the required text for much of the 1st quarter's class work assigned in English 10. This novel explores common themes such as peer pressure, friendship, hazing, relationships, and unfortunately, death. These are themes that most teens are familiar with and have dealt with one or more of these themes in some aspect of their lives. Additionally, this novel questions how far one is willing to go in order to accomplish a goal. This novel will be used to teach many of the 1st quarter's indicators/skills for English 10, including writing two of the six Writing Portfolio pieces: narrative and response to literature. Students will read the novel and respond to various writing prompts (short answer and extended response) using the available technology of the day (specifically ning.com), discussion questions, and students will have to determine the meaning of **SPECIFIC** unknown vocabulary words in order to apply those terms to the novel for understanding; lastly, students have to complete a choice of projects for this novel. All of these assignments will count for the majority of your 1st quarter grade.

The Novel

Jericho Prescott and his cousin, Joshua, can't believe their good luck. They have been asked to pledge the most exclusive club at their school-the Warriors of Distinction. The Warriors, known for their goodwill toy drive every holiday season, and their noble high ideals, seem just too good to be true-perhaps they are. As the initiation process progresses, Jericho finds himself caught in a spiraling situation from which he cannot escape. "All of us or none of us" is just one of the vows the pledges must swear to, so if Jericho should fail in his attempts to pledge the club, the other fourteen pledges will not be accepted either.

Assessment

Grades/Assessments will be divided into four parts

1. Reading response journal
2. Vocabulary

3. written responses
4. Writing portfolio pieces
5. In class projects

Summer Project

Use a spiral One subject notebook to create your Reader's Notebook. In your Reader's Notebook, you will respond to 11 of the 22 discussion topics listed below. Responses should be at least 1 – 1 ½ pages in length. At the conclusion of the novel, you will have a total of 11 Notebook entries. Write the number of each discussion question at the top of each entry page. All 11 entries must be in ONE reader's notebook and will be collected during the first week of class in August.

Discussion Questions

1. **The Battle of Jericho begins with a chapter near the end of the book as an introduction. How does this method of telling the story affect the reader's response? What predictions can the reader make about Jericho and the situation he seems to have gotten himself into? Before reading all that preceded that night and understanding why Jericho was at that place in his life, what was your opinion of his decision?**
2. **As you first meet Jericho, how is he like many young people today? How is he different? What seem to be his biggest insecurities? His greatest strengths?**
3. **Describe the relationship between Josh and Jericho. Why are they so close? How are they alike and how are they different?**
4. **What do you know of Douglass High School from the descriptions given in the text? How would you describe the building itself, the teachers, the students, the administration, the feel of the school? How does it compare to high schools in your community? Why is a high school a good location to discuss serious teenage issues?**
5. **Jericho's great skill and source of pleasure is his trumpet playing. Trace the relationship between Jericho and his trumpet and how his love for music influences his decisions throughout the book. How is music important in the lives of young people? Why is music an easy way to explain complicated feelings? How can self-expression be used as a tool for helping or healing?**
6. **Jericho parents are divorced, but it is clear that he is well loved. How do you think the divorce affected some of the decisions Jericho made in the story? Describe his relationship with Geneva, his father, his mother, and his two stepbrothers. How does the strength of his family make a difference in his life?**
7. **Even though Jericho is fairly intelligent and mature, he is easily entangled in the desire to be**

accepted by the club. Explain how this occurs, and discuss whether you think Jericho's mistakes are realistic.

8. Jericho's teachers seem to have his best interests at heart. Describe his relationship with Mr. Culligan, Mr. Boston, and Mr. Tambori, the music teacher, as well as the custodian and the principal. How does each of them influence his decisions?
9. Describe the relationship between the friends in the book. Is friendship enough when situations become monumental and overwhelming to young people? Explain.
10. Describe each of the nights of the initiation week. How could events have turned out differently? What would you have done in the same situation?
11. What were your predictions about Kofi and his bad heart? What were your predictions about Dana and her success as a pledge?
12. Discuss the character of Eddie and his complicated feelings for Dana. Does he have any redeeming qualities, or is he purely a negative character? What might have made Eddie the person he is? What alternate endings might you create for Eddie at the end of the book?
13. Explain the title of the novel. Why does the title have more than one possible interpretation? Discuss the various "battles" within the story.
14. Discuss the girls in the story. How do their personalities complement each other? How is each one unique? Explain why Dana is such a memorable character. What was your reaction to Arielle?
15. Many people have asked the author why Josh was allowed to die at the end of the novel. What would have been the effect on the novel if Josh had lived? Why is tragedy more memorable and more powerful than happiness in a novel?
16. Families often have difficulties and young people must cope with the situations that arise. Discuss the relationships between the following and discuss the strengths of their families:
 - o Kofi and his parents
 - o November and her mother
 - o Eddie and his father
 - o Eric and his family
 - o Jericho and his family
17. How does peer pressure affect the decisions that were made by the characters in the story? What lessons might the pledges have learned from Eric Bell?

18. Many young people live with unbelievable amounts of pressure from their peers-the way they dress, act, talk, and respond to the world around them is often controlled by the larger group. Discuss how realistic the lives of Jericho and the others are portrayed and how they can become a voice for young readers who are afraid to speak out. What character seems least susceptible to peer pressure? Why? Is this character successful as a teenager in spite of this?
19. The club called the Warriors of Distinction brings about a number of plot developments. Explain how the club can be interpreted as a "character" that affects the rest of the characters and events in the book.
20. Did the Warriors of Distinction have any positive effects in the story? Is it acceptable to do something bad (such as steal a Christmas ornament) if it is for a good purpose (such as to give to orphans)?
21. Do you think the club should be allowed to continue? Explain why or why not.
22. Visualize the next ten years for Jericho, Dana, November, and Kofi. How will their lives be changed by the events of that year in high school? Create a scene in which they meet at a ten-year reunion. What will have happened to them and why?

Writing Assessment

Students will choose from the following list of essay prompts to create an essay to be turned in by August 11, 2010 via email. Papers should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman. Margins should not exceed 1 inch. Students should include a cover page that includes Student Name, Title of Writing Piece, Date, and English 10. Paper should be 3 pages in length. All papers must be submitted as an attachment to email by **midnight August 11, 2010**. Students should organize their essays around a stated thesis, argument, or idea about the novel. This statement should be focused, with clear reasons supporting its conclusion. The thesis and supporting reasons should rely on references to the text.

Writing Portfolio- Narrative

Complete one of two choices:

1. Re-write the ending of the story beginning with the final initiation activities.
2. Continue the story beginning from where the story ends.

Has to be at least 2 pages long- typed. Do not introduce any new characters. Your narrative must follow the overall plot and events of the story.

- A. "Jericho wondered how he could ever be bonded as close to the boys in this room as he already was to Joshua."

Explain how "the Bonding of the Brotherhood" as described by the Warriors, compares to the bonding of friends and family. Use examples from the book to support your statements.

- B. "Jericho took Zora out of the trumpet case then and slowly began to play. The tones, sweet and mellow, floated above the young people in the room. He began with soft, clear notes, bright like jewels, followed by a series of trills that swelled with power. He played the loss of yesterday and tomorrow, of friendship and love. He remembered childhood laughter as he played, and teenage troubles as well. One series of notes, high and delicate, sang of a sweet moonlight kiss gone sour; another line of music rippled with regret over opportunities forever lost."

Write a descriptive paper about a time when you were excited about something that happened to you, or a time when you were especially sad about something. Use sensory imagery to describe this event. Use vivid verbs and powerful adjectives and adverbs as you write. Use as many of the senses as you can. (sight, sound, smell, touch, taste).

- C. "I remember the coach saying that the initiation activities built team spirit and such. But it was horrible."

Research hazing and the dangers of hazing. Write an expository (explanatory) paper on hazing. Tell about the dangers as well as why it is done. Also, include that practices are being used to prevent hazing.

- D. "I have another question," Dana continued. Jericho knew what was coming. He tensed. "Why are there no girls in this club? I'd like to be considered for membership, and I want to know why I wasn't asked to join."

Write a persuasive paper that argues the following point: "It is acceptable for school clubs to allow only one particular group of people as members." Whether you agree or disagree, your paper should address only one side of the issue.

- E. Write a character sketch of Josh-what made him unique-his personality, his charm, his love of life. Use specifics from the book to illustrate your points.

- F. Create a poetry book by writing poetry on the following topics. Be sure to come up with a title for your book.

- a. The Battle Within
- b. Broken Heart
- c. Forever Friends

d. The Joy of Music**e. Death of a Friend****f. A Moment of Silence**

The poem must include figurative language (metaphors, similes, hyperbole, imagery, and alliteration)

The poem must provide sensory details (what one sees, hears, smells, touches, and tastes)

- G. Examine peer pressure. How can teenagers effectively cope with peer pressure? How does peer pressure play a role in the decisions of the characters in the novel? Use details from the book to support your answer.**
- H. Teachers play an important role in the lives of the students in this book-some positively, and others negatively. Discuss the role of a teacher in the lives of teenagers. Consider a career as a teacher. Find out how much college education is needed, how many years of study it takes, and what is required to become a teacher or counselor, or principal.**
- I. Write a paper that investigates the effects of divorce on young people, such as. You might discuss custody, adjustment, or financial situations. Show the results of the effects of divorce on school, personal, and social situations. You may choose to show both positive and negative results.**