

Review: Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone*

Note: the test contains **50 multiple choice** questions and includes **one reading passage**.
To prepare yourself, review the following after finishing the memoir:

Background & Context:

Review the background info in the Sierra Leone google slides [found here or on our class website](#).

- *A Long Way Gone* is an example of what specific genre of writing?
- How did "Sierra Leone" get its name?
- What's Sierra Leone's capital? How did it get this name?
- The predominant religions of Sierra Leone are...
- Be able to find Sierra Leone on a map.
- What is a blood diamond?
- What are some ethical issues surrounding the diamond industry as presented in *Time's* article, "Blood Diamonds"?
- What is the relationship between blood diamonds and child soldiers in SL?
- Be familiar with the RUF, their stated goals, and their tactics.
- How did SL's military forces compare/contrast in tactics to the RUF?
- Who was Foday Sankoh? Charles Taylor? What do they have to do with SL's Civil War?
- When did SL's Civil War begin? End? How did it end?

A Long Way Gone:

- What happens in the preface of *ALWG*? What purpose does it serve in the memoir as a whole?
- What influences did hip-hop have in Ishmael's life?
- What are *crapes*?
- "How de body" is...
- How does music save Ishmael's life? (multiple ways)
- What's Mogbwemo? What happens there that impacts Ishmael's life?
- Recall some of the adages and folktales that Ishmael retells throughout the memoir. What purpose do the stories serve in Ishmael's culture? Why does Ishmael choose to include them in his memoir?
- Who is Lieutenant Jabati? What role does he play in Ishmael's life? How do they bond?
- How does Jabati persuade the villagers to stay and fight? Be able to point to specifics of how he accomplishes this.
- What kinds of things does Ishmael do during his training as a soldier? What kinds of successes and accolades does he receive during his time as a soldier? How do these experiences transform and affect him?
- How does Ishmael escape life as a soldier?
- What happens at Benin Home? How do the workers respond to Ishmael and the other boys? How does Ishmael respond to them?
- Who is Esther? What role does she play in transforming Ishmael from soldier back into child?
- What job does Ishmael end up taking on at the rehabilitation center?
- Identify the chain of events that eventually bring Ishmael to the United States.
- Who is Laura Simms and what role does she play in Ishmael's life?
- What symptoms of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) does Ishmael display?
- What happens when Ishmael returns to Sierra Leone? How is he able to escape to safety?
- Retell the monkey's story at the closing of the memoir. What purpose it serve in the memoir as a whole?

Themes/Motifs:

Find (and be able to identify) examples of the following themes and motifs in *ALWG*:

- the beauty of nature
- the power of music
- the role of family and storytelling in resilience
- the loss of innocence caused by war and violence

Reading Passage:

Review Chimamanda Adichie's TEDTalk, "The Danger of a Single Story":

- What's the Adichie's main idea or through line in this speech?
 - Identify some specific examples Adichie uses to support this.
- According to Adichie, what are the dangers of a single story?
- In *ALWG*, before Ishmael Beah arrives in America, he relates some of his own beliefs about the country that further support Adichie's claims. What are some of them?
- Reread the following excerpt from the end of Adichie's speech:

Of course, Africa is a continent full of catastrophes: There are immense ones, such as the horrific rapes in Congo and depressing ones, such as the fact that 5,000 people apply for one job vacancy in Nigeria. But there are other stories that are not about catastrophe, and it is very important, it is just as important, to talk about them.

A Long Way Gone is, at times, a brutal and violent book. But what are some specific stories and experiences Beah relates that deliver on Adichie's call to tell "stories [about Africa] that are not about catastrophe"?