

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Soldier's Heart

by Gary Paulsen

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Introduction

Soldier's Heart is a third-person narrative about Charley Goddard and his experiences as a Union soldier during the Civil War. The story centers around the events in Charley's life from the time he decides to enlist in the First Minnesota Volunteers (1861) until two years after he is discharged (1867) at the end of the war (1865).

Gary Paulsen also deals with the universal concepts of hatred, pride, fear, death, survival, disillusionment, disappointment, depression, suffering, futility, perseverance, courage, and valor.

The stark realities of the war and all the horrors and disillusionments that come with it are juxtaposed against the simple naïveté of an honest, trusting, loyal, loving boy who simply wants to become independent and have some fun in the "shooting war."

Note to Teacher: The battle scenes are realistic and graphic; therefore, the maturity level of the class should be taken into consideration.

All references come from the Laurel-Leaf Edition of *Soldier's Heart* © 1998.

Soldier's Heart

Objectives

By the end of this Unit, the student will be able to:

1. define and use vocabulary words from the novel.
2. identify and locate the cities and states of Charley's travels from Minnesota to Maryland.
3. describe the battle conditions and locations of four different Civil War battles.
4. discuss the battle strategies of four different Civil War battles.
5. define simple battle terms of the Civil War.
6. discuss Charley Goddard's internal struggles and conflicts between loyalty and humanity.
7. discuss the significance of the use of dialect in the story.
8. understand the basic issues that cause the Civil War.
9. identify the two warring sides in the Civil War.
10. cite and explain the use of irony within the text.
11. discuss the use of Charley's travels from Minnesota to Maryland as symbolism.
12. discuss the external conflict in the novel.
13. compare and contrast the views of the war held by Charley and his mother.
14. compose a character analysis of Charley Goddard.
15. identify and discuss the characteristics of a soldier suffering from Soldier's Heart.
16. comprehend the significance of symbolism in the text.
17. distinguish between the internal and external conflicts that Charley Goddard struggles with.

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Civil War Terms/Southern Dialect

Rebels – people who resist authority or government; southern sympathizers
Union – Northern States loyal to the United States Constitution
Confederates – Southerners who sided with the Confederacy
Unionists – supporters of the Federal Union of the United States
Federal – a supporter or soldier of the Federal Government
Secessionists – those who believed in the right of a state to withdraw from the Federal Union
cracker – a negative term for an impoverished white person
regular army troops – the permanent standing army of the United States
Corporal – low-ranking officer
Sergeant – a medium-ranking officer
compound – space used for the temporary confinement of prisoners of war
ammunition – bullets; gunpowder; shells
troops – soldiers
ranks – a row of soldiers or horses placed side by side
cartridge – a metal casing for a firearm
drills – repeated exercises for training
formation – an arrangement of troops or ships
musket – a hand firearm
bayonet – a detachable dagger-like blade on the end of a rifle used for hand-to-hand fighting
bore – the inside width of a gun barrel
ramrod – a metal rod used for cleaning or ramming down the charge of a gun
close-order drill – a series of military exercises in marching and maneuvering
civilians – any person not in military service
heft – to lift, raise, or heave up
manual of arms – drill exercises for handling weapons
volunteer – a person who enters into any service by free will
desert – to leave without permission; abandon
truce – a temporary stop of warfare by agreement
commissary – an army officer in charge of providing soldiers with food and other supplies
sutler – camp-follower selling provisions to soldiers

Chapter Three – Toward Manassas

Vocabulary

plush – luxurious

coloreds – slang for black people

wrongheadedness – stubbornness; refusal to agree

Johnny Reb – a Confederate

pastures – fields used for grazing

conscious – being aware of one's sensations, feelings, or external things

profanity – irreverence toward God or holy things

immoral – violation of accepted principles of right behavior

initially – at the beginning

1. What do Charley and the other soldiers think of the train ride?

2. Where does the train ride begin and where does it end? What states does the train pass through on the way?

3. What is it that Charley sees for the first time once the train moves into Maryland?

4. What does Charley think about slavery? What aspect of slavery does he question?

5. How do the “coloreds” look to Charley?

Chapter Nine – Gettysburg

Vocabulary

skirmishes – episodes of irregular fighting

batteries – subunits of guns and men

barrage – bombardment

tapered off – lessened

brow – the summit of a hill

grapeshot – fire from a cannon

tableau – a group of motionless figures

1. After the third battle, Charley and the other men in his Union regiment are at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Compare this battle with the others.

2. Where does Charley get the new rifle he is using for this battle, and what is wrong with it?

3. How do the Rebels prepare the hill Charley is on before they charge?

4. How effective is the Rebel barrage on the Union hill?

5. After the Rebel's artillery barrage, the Rebs start moving across the meadow and up the hill. What do the Union soldiers do?
