



# THE KNOX SCHOOL

## English I 2020 Summer Assignment

*A Long Way Gone, Ishmael Beah*

### **Part One: Historical Context**

Read the attached background information on the Sierra Leone Civil War and take notes on key details that will help you get a better understanding of what it was like to live through this time period so you can apply it to your reading and essay.

### **Part Two: Read and Take Notes/Annotate.**

*It is recommended that you purchase and annotate the text to develop a better understanding of the novel. Tips for annotation are attached.*

### **Part Three: Essay**

**Prompt:** Ishmael Beah explains throughout the memoir that he needed to shut himself off emotionally to survive. Write an essay that explains how the emotional detachment was a key factor in his survival of the Sierra Leone civil war using evidence from the text.

### **Guidelines:**

1. Proper MLA Format (including header and works cited page)
2. 12 pt Times New Roman font; 1 inch margins; double spaced
3. Avoid using words like "Me", "My", "I"
4. Include a strong thesis that responds to the prompt and can be proven with evidence in your body paragraphs.
5. Incorporate textual evidence to support your thesis
6. Avoid summarizing the novel. Be sure to ANALYZE.

**Due Date:** A PRINTED copy of your assignment will be due on the first day of your English I class.

All late assignments will be subjected to a grade reduction or penalty, as outlined in the course syllabus and copied below:

### **English Department Late Work Policy:**

"All essays and projects are expected to be submitted on or before the due date. Essays not submitted on time will be subjected to a 10% deduction of max points per day. No essays will be accepted after five (5) days."

## Tips for Annotating a Text

### INTERACT with the reading.

- Mark it up! (Make your own key. Annotations are designed to help you understand and be able to review and/or discuss the reading)
  - Use SYMBOLS to mark important details.
    - “?” – I’m not sure what is going on. I’m not sure what is meant by this sentence, paragraph, etc.
    - “!”- This is exciting; I agree
    - ↗ - connections between different parts of the text
  - Color Code! Use colors to mark important details.
    - Words I don't know and need to look up.
    - Literary devices
    - Important character details
    - Interesting or important details that pertain to understanding the story
- Write in your book (you can also use post-it notes if you prefer not to write in the book)
  - COMMENT on what is happening
    - Do you agree or disagree?
    - Is this a change in characterization? How so?
    - Is this a change in plot/storyline? How did it change?
    - Is this a big event? Small event?
    - Is it a foreshadow of something to come? A flashback of something that happened?
  - QUESTION the text
    - Why is this happening?
    - Why did the author include this? Why it is included here? What purpose does it serve to the text? Would it be different if it was included at a different time in the story? How?
    - Why is the character behaving this way? How is it different from before? What does it reveal about the character?
    - What might this piece reveal about the rest of the story? How does it make something clearer from earlier in the story?
  - CONNECT to the text
    - How can you relate to a character?
    - How can you relate to the author?
    - What about the author’s life is showing in the text?
    - What are some allusions?
    - What are some similar real-life examples of what is happening in the text?
  - ASSOCIATE the text with another reading
    - Textual allusions
    - Similar details
    - Connections between the authors?

### LEARN from the text

- Historical Context
  - What is the time period of the story? What is the time period the story was written? How do they connect or differ?
- Author Study
  - What was the author’s childhood like? What sparked the author to write this text? What was the purpose of publishing this text?
- Response to the Text

- How did readers initially respond to the text when it was published? Has the opinion changed since then? How?

**REFLECT** on the text

- What was the author's writing style?
- What were some patterns in the writing? Did it remind you of another author?
- What were some key themes or topics discussed in the text?
- Who was the text written for? Did it reach that audience? Why/Why not?
- What was the author's purpose? Did he/she accomplish that purpose?

# THE SIERRA LEONE CIVIL WAR (1991-2002)

POSTED ON JANUARY 16, 2017 BY CONTRIBUTED BY: [SAMUEL MOMODU](#)



Diamond panning, Sierra Leone  
Courtesy World Health Organization

The Sierra Leone Civil War was an armed conflict in the West African country of Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002. The war began on March 23, 1991, when the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) under Foday Sankoh, with support of Liberian rebel leader Charles Taylor and his group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), attempted to overthrow the government of Sierra Leonean President Joseph Momah. The Sierra Leone Civil War was one of the bloodiest in Africa resulting in more than fifty thousand people dead and half a million displaced in a nation of four million people. The conflict was particularly violent and long because both the RUF and the Sierra Leone government were often funded by “blood diamonds” mined with slave labor.

During the first year of the war, the RUF took control of the diamond-rich territory in eastern and southern Sierra Leone. On April 29, 1992, President Joseph Momah was ousted in military coup led by Captain Valentine Strasser who created the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC). Strasser said the corrupt Momah could not resuscitate the economy, provide for the people of Sierra Leone, and repel the rebel invaders.

In March 1993, the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) sent mostly Nigerian troops to Freetown, the capital, and assisted the Sierra Leone Army in recapturing the diamond districts and pushing the RUF to the diamond districts and pushing the RUF to the Sierra Leone-Liberia border. By the end of 1993, many observers thought the war had ended because the RUF ceased most of its military operations. Yet what had begun as a civil war now had international implications as the Sierra Leone government was supported by ECOMOG, Great Britain, Guinea, and the United States while the RUF was backed by Liberia (now under the control of Charles Taylor), Libya, and Burkina Faso.

In March 1995, the Sierra Leone government hired Executive Outcomes (EO) a South Africa-based mercenary group to defeat finally the RUF. Meanwhile, Sierra Leone installed

an elected civilian government in March 1996, and the retreating RUF signed the Abidjan Peace Accord which brought an end to the fighting. In May 1997, however, a group of Sierra Leone Army officers staged a coup and established the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) as the new government of the country. They invited the RUF to join them, and the two factions now ruled Freetown, the nation's capital, with little resistance.

The new government under Johnny Paul Koroma declared the war over. Yet looting, rape, and murder mostly by RUF forces quickly followed the new government's announcement and illustrated its weakness. ECOMOG forces returned and retook Freetown on behalf of the Koroma government but could not pacify outlying regions. The RUF continued the civil war.

In January 1999, world leaders intervened to promote negotiations between the RUF and the government. The Lome Peace Accord was signed on July 7, 1999. That agreement gave Foday Sankoh, the commander of the RUF, the vice presidency and control of Sierra Leone's diamond mines in return for a cessation of the fighting and the deployment of a UN peacekeeping force to monitor the disarmament process. RUF compliance with the disarmament process was inconsistent and sluggish, and by May 2000, the rebels were again advancing on Freetown. With help from United Nations forces, British troops, and Guinean air support, the Sierra Leone Army finally defeated the RUF before they could take control of Freetown. On January 18, 2002, newly installed President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah declared the Sierra Leone Civil War had finally ended.