

## Olentangy Local School District Literature Selection Review

Teacher:	A. Brown/Poliseno	School:	OHMS
Book Title:	A Long Way Home: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier	Genre:	Memoirs and Autobiographies
Author:	Ishmael Beah	Pages:	229
Publisher:	Sarah Crichton Books 1st edition (August 5, 2008)	Copyright:	2008

*In a brief rationale, please provide the following information relative to the book you would like added to the school's book collection for classroom use. You may attach additional pages as needed.*

**Book Summary and summary citation:** (suggested resources include book flap summaries, review summaries from publisher, book vendors, etc.)

At the age of twelve, Ishmael Beah fled attacking rebels in Sierra Leone and wandering a land rendered unrecognizable by violence. By thirteen, he'd been picked up by the government army, and Beah, at heart a gentle boy found that he was capable of truly terrible acts. At sixteen, he was removed from fighting by UNICEF, and through the help of the staff at his rehabilitation center, he learned how to forgive himself, to regain his humanity, and, finally to heal.

This is an extraordinary and mesmerizing account, told with real literary force and heartbreaking honesty.

**Provide an instructional rationale for the use of this title, including specific reference to the OLSD curriculum map(s):** (Curriculum maps may be referenced by grade/course and indicator number or curriculum maps with indicators highlighted may be attached to this form)  
Read and comprehend complex literary text independently and proficiently.

Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Interpret words and phrases as they are used in text.

Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.

**Include two professional reviews of this title:** (a suggested list of resources for identifying professional reviews is shown below. Reviews may be "cut and pasted" (with citation) into the form or printed reviews may be attached to the form)

Review #1

"Told in clear, accessible language by a young writer with a gifted literary voice, this memoir seems destined to become a classic firsthand account of war and the ongoing plight of child soldiers in conflicts worldwide. "

— Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)

Review #2

"A Long Way Gone was nominated for a Quill Award in the Best Debut Author category for 2007. Time magazine's Lev Grossman named it one of the Top 10 Nonfiction Books of 2007, ranking it at No. 3, and praising it as "painfully sharp", and its ability to take "readers behind the dead eyes of the child-soldier in a way no other writer has." [3] The book was also included in Amazon's 100 books to read in a lifetime list." Wikipedia

**What alternate text(s) could also fulfill the instructional requirements?**

<u>Title:</u> Every Falling Star	<u>Author:</u> Sungju Lee
<u>Title:</u>	<u>Author:</u>

**Document any potentially controversial content:**

Parents need to know that A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier is the critically acclaimed memoir of Ishmael Beah, who was a child soldier during Sierra Leone's civil war. Orphaned at 12, Ishmael would walk through a war-ravaged countryside, often starving and always afraid, until at 13, he found refuge with government soldiers. Soldiers who would turn him into a killer. For the next three years, Ishmael would witness or take part in unimaginable acts of violence that are often graphically described in the book. Violent death is constant and pervasive, with countless men, women, children, and babies stabbed, shot, mutilated, or burned alive. One town he enters is described as having "air that smells of blood and burnt flesh." At 16, UNICEF workers gained his release and he was sent to a rehabilitation center for boy soldiers where he found a chance to rebuild his life. Beah would go on to finish his education in the United States and become UNICEF's Advocate for Children Affected by War. First published in 2007, A Long Way Gone was a New York Times best-seller. It has been translated into more than 40 languages and is sometimes assigned in school. (from Common Sense Media)

**Keeping in mind the age, academic level, and maturity of the intended reader, what is the suggested classroom use: (check all that apply)**

Gifted/Accelerated  Regular  At Risk

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** 6  7  8  9  10  11  12

**Reading level of this title (if applicable):** Lexile Score=920

**Date Submitted to Department Chair:** 11/26//18

**Suggested Professional Literary Review Sources:**

School Library Journal

Horn Book

Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

Library Journal

Book Links

Publisher's Weekly

Booklist

Kirkus Review

Wilson Library Catalog

English Journal (and other resources of the National Council of Teachers of English)

The Reading Teacher (International Reading Association)

Literature for Today's Young Adults