



The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child - Child Soldiers – Notes



- **Activity types:** Discussion, reading texts, Internet search, watching films
- **Level:** Intermediate
- **Language:** Talking about children's rights; reading and discussing the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*; reporting news; summarizing
- **Note:** The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is a comprehensive, internationally binding agreement on the rights of children, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20th November 1989. It incorporates children's **civil and political rights** (like their treatment under the law), **social, economic and cultural rights** (like an adequate standard of living) and **protection rights** (from abuse and exploitation).

A child is defined in the UNCRC as a person under the age of 18.

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- Write the words **CHILDREN'S RIGHTS** on the board and ask students to give examples of the rights that children enjoy or should enjoy everyday. Write their answers on the board as a spidergram.

Possible answers: life - family – house – education – health care – food – play

- Elicit different kinds of rights (civil, political, social, economic, cultural, etc.) and invite students to discuss which in their opinion are the most basic and to give reasons.
- Introduce the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* (UNCRC). You can download the text, also available in simplified versions, and background information from several websites, including www.un.org; www.amnesty.org; www.unicef.org; www.childrensrights.ie
- Divide students into pairs or small groups. They can read some of the 54 articles from the **UNCRC**. After they can report to open class and discuss which rights are ensured in their own country; if they know of countries where some rights are not ensured or violated. They can report local, national or international news about **violations of children's rights**. You can also provide some newspaper articles or news downloaded from the web for students to read, summarize and report. Alternatively, students can search for news on the web and report their findings.
- Focus on **child soldiers** (see article 38 of UNCRC). Worldwide, hundreds of thousands of children have been affected by armed conflict. Although international law prohibits the participation in armed conflict of children aged under 18, they are recruited into government armed forces, paramilitaries, civil militia and a variety of other armed groups. Often they are abducted at school, on the streets or at home. Girls and boys, illegally and under force, participate in combat where they are frequently injured or killed. Others are used as spies, messengers, porters or to lay or clear landmines. Girls are at particular risk of rape and other sexual abuse. Such children are robbed of their childhood and exposed to terrible dangers and to psychological and physical suffering. [adapted from *amnesty.org*]
- On 25th May 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted the Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on the involvement of children in armed conflicts. 107 states were parties to the Protocol.
- Students could search for more information about the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, of which Amnesty International is a member.
- You can show students a film on child soldiers in English (*Ezra, War Child, Johnny Mad Dog, Innocent Voices, Soldier Child, Blood Diamond...*).



War Child – The Cranberries – Notes



- **Activity types:** Vocabulary (opposites), Listening for specific words, gap fill
- **Level:** Pre-Intermediate/Intermediate
- **Language:** Tense Review
- **Note:** This song was released on the 1996 album *To The Faithful Departed*. The Cranberries' most popular song, *Zombie*, was written in memory of Jonathan Ball, aged 3, and Tim Parry, aged 12, killed in an IRA bombing in Warrington in 1993. There is also a worksheet for this song on www.tuneintoenglish.com.

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1. Tell students they are going to listen to a song on child soldiers. Write the following words on the board. Ask students to find their opposites alone or in pairs.

above – adult – defeat – first – generosity – peace – shame – summer – superficial – thin – winner – woman

KEY: (at this stage any correct opposite is acceptable):

beneath – child – victory – last – greed – war – pride – winter – deep – thick – loser – man

2. Ask students to listen for the opposites from the previous activity, correcting if necessary, and numbering them in the order they hear them in any form (singular/plural). If they appear more than once, refer to the first time. Play the song.

KEY: 1. War 2. Child 3. Thick 4. Loser 5. Victory 6. Pride 7. Greed 8. Last

9. Winter 10. Man 11. Beneath 12. Deep

3. Feedback, then give each student a copy of the worksheet and ask them to fill in the gaps with the missing words, based on their answers to the previous activity and context.
4. Play the song again. Students check their answers in pairs or in groups.
5. Correct in open class, play the song and sing together!
6. **Grammar focus (Tense Review):** Students can group the verbs of the song according to their form or tense (base form, imperative, present simple, past simple, past simple continuous, future with *will*)



War Child – The Cranberries



Who will save the _____, baby?
 Who controls the key?
 The web we weave is _____ and sordid,
 Fine by me.

At times of _____ we're all the _____,
 There's no _____.
 We shoot to kill and kill your lover,
 Fine by me.

_____, **victim of political** _____.
Plant the seed, territorial _____.
Mind the _____,
We should mind the _____.

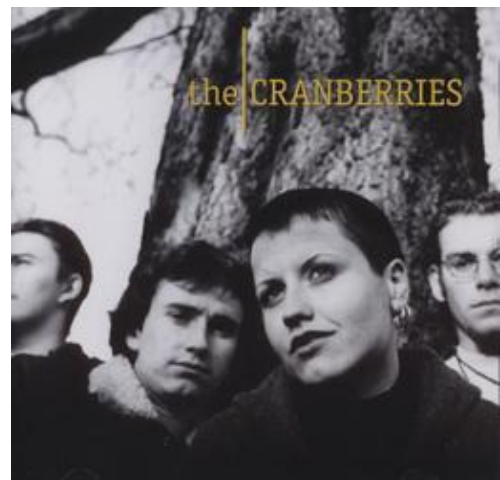
I spent _____ in New York,
 And came upon a _____.
 He was sleeping on the streets and homeless,
 He said, "I fought in Vietnam."

_____ his shirt he wore the mark,
 He bore the mark with _____.
 A two-inch _____ incision carved,
 Into his side.

_____, **victim of political** _____.
Plant the seed, territorial _____.
Mind the _____,
We should mind the _____.

Who's the _____ now?
 Who's the _____ now?
 We're all the _____ now!
 We're all the _____ now!

 _____.





War Child – The Cranberries - Complete



Who will save the **war child**, baby?
Who controls the key?
The web we weave is **thick** and sordid.
Fine by me.

At times of **war** we're all the **losers**,
There's no **victory**.
We shoot to kill and kill your lover.
Fine by me.

War child, victim of political **pride**.
Plant the seed, territorial **greed**.
Mind the **war child**,
We should mind the **war child**.

I spent **last winter** in New York,
And came upon a **man**.
He was sleeping on the streets and homeless,
He said, "I fought in Vietnam."

Beneath his shirt he wore the mark,
He bore the mark with **pride**.
A two-inch **deep** incision carved,
Into his side.

War child, victim of political **pride**.
Plant the seed, territorial **greed**.
Mind the **war child**,
We should mind the **war child**.

Who's the **loser** now?
Who's the **loser** now?
We're all the **losers** now!
We're all the **losers** now!

War child,
War child.