

Blue Gold



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Author	Elizabeth Stewart
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Synopsis	This is a story of African, Canadian, and Chinese girls. Moral and ethical issues concerning the smartphone industry have affected each girl. Readers will learn about similarities and differences in the lives of teens around the world.
Themes	Social justice
Content Warning	This book contains sexual violence. Sylvie, a refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo, recounts the attack of an armed group on her family. These memories include violent behavior and rape.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Blue Gold, Day 1



Analyze the key paragraph.

Contrast Sylvie's future aspirations with her living conditions.

Key Paragraph, p. 13

"Either way, Sylvie told herself she didn't care about how she looked. She was glad she'd never had a husband. Instead, she's stay in school, her father had been educated at a university, and she would be too. Maybe she'd even become a doctor, just like Doctor Marie in the camp hospital. She would make Papa's spirit proud of her—as proud as her mother was ashamed."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

At the end of this unit, your final writing product will be titled, *Portraits of Teens Around the World*. The essay will discuss how being a teen is similar and how it is different around the world.

Today's Assignment

Write a paragraph about the responsibilities of teenage girls from different parts of the world. Fiona, Sylvie, and Laiping are about the same age. However, their responsibilities are different. Sylvie must take care of her mother and siblings. Laiping works to send money home. Fiona must do well in school and after-school activities.

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Blue Gold, Day 2



Analyze the key paragraph.

Contrast Laiping's desire to be with her family and the terms of her employment.

Key Paragraph, p. 44

"Laiping's smile faded slightly. She had been so caught up in the excitement of working in Shenzhen that she had never considered she might be required to stay for a certain period. Two years seemed like a very long time to be away from home."

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Today's Assignment

Write a paragraph about the different reasons for separation in families. Sylvie has an opportunity to study in Canada. Laiping left home to get a job. Fiona divides her time between her father's house and mother's house. How does each girl feel about being away from a family member?

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt *Blue Gold*, Day 3



Analyze the key paragraph.

Discuss Laiping's appraisal of the working conditions at the factory.

Key Paragraph, p. 79

"Pleased with herself, Laiping glanced down the line of blue-capped heads bowed to their task in quiet efficiency—in the shared certainty of three meals a day and a warm bed at night—and pondered what on earth could make workers so unhappy with their lot that they would throw themselves off the roof of a dormitory rather than face another day."

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Today's Assignment

Write a paragraph about the people who support the main characters in the book, *Blue Gold*. Who are the people who support Sylvie, Fiona, and Laiping? How do they support them? **Use as much detail as you can.**

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt *Blue Gold*, Day 4



Analyze the key paragraph.

Discuss Sylvie's dilemma concerning leaving for Canada.

Key Paragraph, p. 86

"Mama's eyes met Sylvie's without spirit, used up. She gave Sylvie a short nod, then resumed walking, as though putting one foot in front of the other took all the energy she had. Sylvie lifted the basket of laundry onto her head and followed, asking herself for the hundredth time, *How can I leave her?* And, for the hundredth time, *How can I stay?*"

EXTEND

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Character Education at the Markkula Center for Applied Ethics

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Today's Assignment

Write a paragraph about the relationship between Sylvie and her mother. How did the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo affect their relationship?

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program 90-Minute Lesson Plan
Blue Gold, Day 5



Analyze the key paragraph.

Discuss Laiping's plan to escape the poverty of her family and the reality she discovered in Shenzhen.

Key Paragraph, p. 103

"Fen pulled Laiping past the restaurant where workers were filling their stomachs with hamburgers. A few moments ago, Laiping had thought about joining them. Now she realized that, with the money she'd brought from home almost gone, she could barely afford to buy tea, let alone a meal—or a mobile phone. Laiping wanted to shout out loud that the company was cheating them, but she let Fen lead her away, tears of frustration burning her eyes."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

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Today's Assignment

Write a paragraph contrasting the childhood dreams of Min and Laiping and their current living conditions. In your opinion, what changes in social policy could help girls like Min and Laiping reach their personal goals in life?

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Blue Gold, Day 6



Analyze the key paragraph.

Discuss the empathy of Chinese workers towards Congolese refugees.

Key Paragraph, p. 122

"It isn't just us in China who are getting a bad deal. Her name is Sylvie. She's a refugee from the war in the Congo, where the factory gets tantalum."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

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Today's Assignment

In reference to Marie's words to Sylvie (p. 115): "When people see you and find out about your life, they start to understand what's going on in the DRC," write a paragraph about the importance of seeing photos and learning about the personal stories of people your age who live in other parts of the world.

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt

Blue Gold, Day 7



Analyze the key paragraph.

Discuss Fiston's kindness to Sylvie.

Key Paragraph, p. 137

"The big man hesitated. "The boss will not like it."

"He said it is alright," she told him. "He said to ask you to take me to him."

The fighter's eyes narrowed. Sylvie could see he knew she was lying, but he also saw her desperation, and there was a kindness about him."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

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Today's Assignment

Write a paragraph about Sylvie's fear that Pascal and Jean-Yves are becoming child soldiers.

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program 90-Minute Lesson Plan *Blue Gold*, Day 8



Analyze the key paragraph.

Discuss the importance of empathy towards teens, including those from other countries.

Key Paragraph, p. 172

"Enough with the guilt, thought Fiona, I don't even have enough money to buy a phone. But there was something captivating about Sylvie's picture."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

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Today's Assignment

Write a paragraph about mother-child interactions. Refer to Fiona's understanding in the following quote (p. 172): "Sylvie came back into frame again and the women started yelling at her in some African language. *Definitely her mother*, thought Fiona."

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt *Blue Gold*, Day 9



Analyze the key paragraph.

Discuss Kai's courage and determination knowing the danger in supporting workers' rights.

Key Paragraph, pp. 215–216

"There are work camps full of people whose only crime is trying to change things. If somebody dares to speak out about being worked to death, or about corrupt officials taking all the money for themselves, the next thing they know, police are busting down their door in the middle of the night."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

At the end of this unit, your final writing product will be titled, *Portraits of Teens Around the World*. The essay will discuss how being a teen is similar and how it is different around the world.

Today's Assignment

Write a paragraph expressing your opinion about civic engagement of teens. You may use as example Fiona's lack of awareness of the events in the Democratic Republic of Congo or Kai's attempts to organize workers to discuss their rights.

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt *Blue Gold*, Day 10



Analyze the key paragraph.

Discuss how the tragedy of their father's death affected the relationship between Olivier and Sylvie.

Key Paragraph, p. 225

"Sylvie squeezed his arms to let him know that she didn't hate him, that somehow the truth had made them brother and sister again."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

At the end of this unit, your final writing product will be titled, *Portraits of Teens Around the World*. The essay will discuss how being a teen is similar and how it is different around the world.

Today's Assignment

Write 1–2 paragraphs about empathy. Olivier came to realize that Sylvie should not marry Kayembe. Doctor Marie convinced the head of the clinic to protect Sylvie from Kayembe. Fiona's mother showed her love, trust, and emotional support to her daughter. Discuss why empathy is important in showing kindness.

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt *Blue Gold*, Day 11



Analyze the key paragraph.

Discuss how empathy counteracts stereotypes.

Key Paragraph, p. 281

"Fiona held the cell phone up between the picture of Sylvie on the laptop and the one of the factory girl on the smartphone. *See me whole*, said Fiona's eyes. *See who I really am. Make that three girls*, she thought. *On three continents*."

Write a short product based on today's prompt to connect to the unit theme.

At the end of this unit, your final writing product will be titled, *Portraits of Teens Around the World*. The essay will discuss how being a teen is similar and how it is different around the world.

Today's Assignment

Write a closing paragraph that compares the personalities, aspirations, and strengths of Fiona, Laiping, and Sylvie.

Use as much detail as you can.

Character-Based Literacy Program Writing Prompt *Blue Gold*, Final Assignment

Expository Essay

Your final writing product will be titled, *Portraits of Teens Around the World*. The essay will discuss how being a teen is similar and how it is different around the world.

Begin your essay with a well-defined thesis statement or the key idea you will discuss and support with examples. Use the paragraphs you have completed over the last two weeks to support each claim. The essay should be concise – avoid repetition and redundancy in statements.

You may have to re-write some sentences or paragraphs from your daily projects and writings. You may also need to add leading or unifying sentences at the beginning or end of paragraphs to aid your reader in following the direction of your essay.

Create a timeline to organize your work schedule:

What	When
Create a thesis statement	
Pre-write to organize your ideas	
Rough draft	
Edit/peer edit	
Final draft turn in	