

Summer Reading

Booker T. Washington High School 2016/2017 Sophomores (grade 10)

Sophomores will read the following book:

- *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah

My new friends have begun to suspect I haven't told them the full story of my life. "Why did you leave Sierra Leone?" "Because there is a war." "You mean, you saw people running around with guns and shooting each other?" "Yes, all the time." "Cool." I smile a little. "You should tell us about it sometime." "Yes, sometime." This is how wars are fought now: by children, hopped-up on drugs and wielding AK-47s. Children have become soldiers of choice. In the more than fifty conflicts going on worldwide, it is estimated that there are some 300,000 child soldiers. Ishmael Beah used to be one of them. What is war like through the eyes of a child soldier? How does one become a killer? How does one stop? Child soldiers have been profiled by journalists, and novelists have struggled to imagine their lives. But until now, there has not been a first-person account from someone who came through this hell and survived. In *A Long Way Gone*, Beah, now twenty-five years old, tells a riveting story: how at the age of twelve, he fled attacking rebels and wandered 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. This is a rare and mesmerizing account, told with real literary force and heartbreaking honesty.

*(Summary from Tulsa City County Library catalog <http://opac.tulsalibrary.org>)

We recommend that you:

- purchase or check out the book early. Book stores and libraries may be in short supply in late summer.
- go in together with two or three friends to share the expense.
- Purchase a used book online or download an ebook.
- take notes as you read.

We will be working with the book when you begin school in August, so you must have the book read and be ready to begin classroom assignments the first day of school.

Use these guidelines for taking notes over the book. These notes will help you prepare for the assignments during the opening days of school in August:

- Describe Beah's early life and how he became a soldier.
- Outline the important experiences he had as a soldier.
- Describe how he was able to "escape" from being a soldier
- Describe the aspects of Beah's personality & character that you believed helped him overcome this experience and lead a successful life.