

**Title**

No Man's Land

**Grade Level**

9-12

**Author**

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**Time Required**

3 - 4 class periods

**Objectives**

By the end of the lesson the learner will be able to...

1. discuss reasons for the animosity between the Bosniacs and the Serbs.
2. identify and describe the ways in which the United Nations is limited (either externally or internally) in their ability to act as peacekeepers in Bosnia.
3. explore the motives of the international media in covering events like those depicted in the film.

**Appropriate National Standards**

9.b – explain conditions and motivations that contribute to conflict, cooperation and interdependence among groups, societies and nations

9.g – describe and evaluate the role of international and multinational organizations in the global arena

9.h – illustrate how individual behaviors and decisions connect with global systems

**Background**

Students have been learning about the war in Bosnia and the subsequent acts of ethnic cleansing and genocide there. In this lesson, students will watch the 2001 film *No Man's Land*. This film explores what happens when three soldiers (1 Serb, 2 Bosniac) are caught in a trench between their respective front lines. The animosities, commonalities and role of the United Nations and international media are thought-provokingly explored over the course of this award-winning look at the atrocities of Bosnia.

**Materials**

Copy of *No Man's Land*

**Procedure**

This film may be explored multiple ways. The class could engage in watching the film in its entirety, followed by a discussion of major themes, or watch a number of clips that highlight the main themes of the film. A list of film clips and their timings are included at the end of this lesson plan, organized by major topic.

**Days 1 & 2**

1. Before viewing the film review the main characters with the students.

Ciki – Bosniac soldier in the trench

Nino – Serb soldier in the trench

Cera – Bosniac soldier in the trench with mine buried beneath him

Marchand – UN officer who wants to help

Soft – UNOFPRO commander

Jane Livingstone – International media reporter

2. Students view film. Students should jot down notes about their thoughts and reactions to the various characters and their actions.

### Day 3

The teacher should guide the students in a discussion of the major themes of the film. Some questions to have students consider:

1. How do the resources of the Serb army seem to compare to the resources of the Bosnian army?
2. Why does the Serb soldier place the mine under Cera's body? What does he plan to have happen by doing so?
3. What are the reasons that both Nino and Ciki give for who started the war and why it was their fault? Do you think either side is right? Why or why not?
4. Ciki and Nino's argument over who started the war comes immediately after neither side is able to determine if Nino was one of their own soldiers. How does this event play into the complicated nature of this conflict?
5. How are the ways that Nino and Ciki treat one another when the other is unarmed a reflection of the relationship between the Serbs and the Bosniacs?
6. What are some of the ways that Ciki and Nino find themselves to be similar?
7. What are some of the ways that Ciki and Nino depend on one another during their time in the trench?
8. The United Nations is criticized for not doing anything to help the situation in Bosnia, but how does UN intervention help further the tension between Nino and Ciki?
9. The international media acts as though they are shedding light on atrocities even though they are actually just chasing the next big story. Compare and contrast how Livingstone and her producers view the scenario. Is there real concern or does tragedy equal ratings?
10. Members of the United Nations and the media act as though they want to be compassionate and help the situation; however, when things don't go their way, they refer to the Serbs and Bosniacs as "maniacs" or "damn Balkanians." Can outside organizations provide meaningful support if they fall back on cultural stereotypes that render their recipients as helpless?
11. In the end, the United Nations pretends they have saved Cera, while inciting more violence between the Serbs and Bosnians in order to cover up the evidence and their failure. Captain Dubois tells Marchand the he hopes he now realizes "it's not our business, so we stay out of it." Do you think Dubois' point is valid? What is your reaction to the UN's solution to Cera's problem? Is there any other way the UN could have handled the situation?



12. Soft tells Marchand that alerting the media to Cera still being on top of the mine "wouldn't make any difference, it wouldn't change anything." Do you agree or disagree? Explain.
13. Do you think Livingstone knows Cera was not brought out? If so, why does she choose not to film the trench?
14. How do the death of Ciki and Nino and the lack of resolution for Cera serve as a parable for the larger picture of the Bosnian war and the role of the United Nations and international media in it?

### **Assessment**

Students can be assessed on their classroom participation during the film discussion. Students could also write a movie review and analysis, create character sketches of the main characters or use *No Man's Land* as a basis for further investigation of the role of the United Nations and international media in other cases of genocide such as those found in Rwanda or Sudan.

## **List of Film Clips**

### Relations between Bosniacs and Serbs /Ciki and Nino

- 17:42 – 20:23 -Setting the mine underneath Cera's body
- 24:35 – 27:09 – Nino strips to draw attention, neither side can tell which side he belongs to
- 27:19 – 29:50 – Argument over who began the war
- 30:33 – 31:59 – Cera wakes up, realization of mine under his body
- 30:33 – 38:11 – Cera wakes up, and Nino and Ciki both get control of guns
- 44:26 – 46:23 – Language barriers between UN, Serbs and Bosniacs
- 46:24 – 47:59 – Common experiences of Nino and Ciki
- 54:19 – 56:19 – Nino tries to leave with UN, shot by Ciki
- 1:05:59 – 1:08:13 – Nino stabs Ciki
- 1:14:42 – 1:18:11 – Further tension in the trench, mine team arrives, media sensationalism
- 1:18:12 – 1:32:40 – Film climax and resolution

### Role of the United Nations

- 41:08 – 42:30 – Intro to United Nations
- 48:40 – 49:51 – UN shirking responsibility to help
- 50:59 – 55:28 – Marchand arrives at trench, commanded to leave
- 56:19 – 1:00:55 – Livingstone confronts Marchand, Marchand uses Livingstone
- 1:01:55 – 1:05:43 – Soft watches media coverage
- 1:18:12 – 1:32:40 – film climax and resolution

### Role of the International Media

- 56:19 – 1:00:55 – Livingstone confronts Marchand, Marchand uses Livingstone
- 1:01:55 – 1:05:43 – Media coverage of Bosnia
- 1:08:53 – 1:13:23 – Media chasing down UN, arrival of mine team, attempted interviews
- 1:16:20 – 1:16:56 – Media coverage of Ciki and Nino exiting trench
- 1:18:12 – 1:32:40 – film climax and resolution