UNIT XV

AMERICAN LITERATURE

The Bridges at Toko-ri

DISCUSSION OR RESEARCH TOPICS

Below is a list of topics or ideas that you may wish to think about and discuss as you are reading The Bridges at Toko-ri. Some of the topics you may want to use for oral or written reports. If you do, be sure to ask your teacher to explain to you the list of magazine articles that follows these sheets, as you will have to know how to look up magazines in the Reader's Guide and how to use magazine articles in the library before you can prepare your reports.

Historical Topics

1. Will there be future Koreas? What is happening now in Laos, Berlin, South Vietnam, etc.

2. The basis of the cold war: What is communism? What led to the development of communist theory? What is state socialism? What is the difference between socialism and communism? Is the U. S. S. R. really a pure communist state? Why are Russia and China expansionist? What is democracy? What are the fundamental bases of the "American way of life"? Why is the United States opposed to communism?

3. The Korean conflict: How did the Korean conflict arise? What had been agreed upon about Korea after World War II? What form of government did North Korea have? What form did South Korea have? What actually started the shooting? Why was the U. N. able (in spite of Russia's veto power in the Security Council) to go into South Korea? Who commanded the U. N. forces? What decision did he face when he reached the Yalu River? What was the basis of his disagreement with President Truman and his recall? What made the Red Chinese enter the war? What happened at Pusan? Where did the line between North and South Korea stabilize during the truce talks? What effect did the Korean conflict have on the United States' presidential election of 1952? Where did Eisenhower go after he was elected?

4. Korea today: Why is Korea so strategically important? What were some of the accusations brought against Sygman Rhee in the revolt of 1960? What was the reason for the counter-revolt in 1961?

Personal Topics

1. What are the responsibilities of a soldier or any service man in wartime? What are his responsibilities as a prisoner-of-war?

2. What is brainwashing and how does it work? What are some of the possible explanations for the conduct of American prisoners-of-war in the Korean conflict? What were some of the methods used by the Chinese communists in brainwashing? How is brainwashing related to propaganda? How can one resist brainwashing?
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3. What is fear? What are some of the things that cause fear? How can one learn to control his fears? What is the basic fear of all men? Why must one overcome this fear in wartime?

4. What are the things that contribute to the creation of morale among fighting men? What should a good military officer be like, in your opinion? What effect does the attitude of civilians and the "people back home" have on the serviceman in wartime?

5. Do you think methods for selecting men for the service are just or unjust? Would you change the draft laws? Why or why not? Is there a better way men could be selected?

6. What is the role of women in war? Do women ever actually go out and fight? Have they ever done this in the past? What do they usually do in war? Do women have to have courage during wartime? How does their courage differ from that of men?
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The Bridges at Toko-ri

USE OF STUDY GUIDE

The list of questions which follows is to help you to understand better The Bridges at Toko-ri. The answers to most of these questions cannot be found even if you read carefully or listen attentively to your teacher's reading. You must think about them. Your answers should not come only from what is in the book, but they should also come from your own opinions and thoughts.

As you read or listen to The Bridges at Toko-ri, you might look at the outline your teacher gave you on the analysis of a novel for Johnny Tremain. The Bridges at Toko-ri is also a novel, and you and your teacher will analyze it in the same way that you did Johnny Tremain.

Notice also that many of the characters and the problems these characters face are like those in Johnny Tremain. The events in Johnny Tremain took place about 1773; those in The Bridges at Toko-ri took place about 180 years later. Yet the characters, or people, are much the same and have the same or similar personal problems (for example, they must fight fear in order to gain courage), and the events resemble each other because, in both cases, Americans are fighting for freedom. See how many other similarities you can find as you listen to The Bridges at Toko-ri.
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**STUDY GUIDE**

Part I, Sea

1. What is the significance of the names of the Hornet and Savo? Is the United States "indifferent to catastrophe" and "willing to surmount it"?

2. What is the meaning of the author's statement, "So in an age of flight, in the jet age of incredible speed, these men pushed and pulled and slipped upon the icy deck and ordered the heavy planes with their bare hands"?

3. What does Admiral Tarrant look like? What things about the sea and the sky and men's feelings is he able to sense that make him a good task force commander?

4. Who is Beer Barrel? What "fabulous ability" does he have? Why does he drink beer before he guides the pilots onto the ship? How does he feel about "his" pilots? Why is this important? On what does Beer Barrel have to rely when he brings the jets in? What two decisions can he make?

5. Who is Mike Forney? Why does he wear his stovepipe hat and Kelly green scarf?

6. How does Nestor Gamidge feel about the sea? Why is it important that he went into the water voluntarily? How does Nestor show courage?

7. What is the motive that makes the Admiral stay on course? What chance did he take in order to save the life of his pilot?

8. When Admiral Tarrant tells Mike Forney to make any changes in the rescue outfit that he can, what does he show about his judgment of other people?

9. How does the Admiral react when he hears that Brubaker was the downed pilot? What special significance does Brubaker have for the Admiral?

10. How does Brubaker show he is a civilian? Why does the Admiral discuss Mike Forney with Brubaker when he knows he shouldn't? Why is Brubaker bitter? Why doesn't he "gum up the works on purpose"? What sacrifice has the Admiral made and why? What does Brubaker think would make the war easier? Why aren't people in Denver supporting the war?

11. What does Admiral Tarrant mean when he says, "Every war's the wrong one," and "All through history free men have had to fight the wrong war in the wrong place"?

12. Why does Tarrant think the bridges at Toko-ri are so important?
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1. How does Brubaker show that he loves his wife? Why does Brubaker say his wife had to leave America?

2. What does Admiral Tarrant say society is held together by? What does he mean when he says, "But only a few of you ever really bomb the bridges"?

3. What happened to Admiral Tarrant's wife and why? What has Tarrant sacrificed to war? Why is he upset when people or the United States react with, "Hold back the enemy but let someone else do it"? What is Admiral Tarrant secretly worried about? Are you worried about the same thing? How would you answer his question? What does Tarrant hope the destruction of the bridges will do?