

## Being At War

This project will be about being at war, but “being at war” will have different meanings: Firstly, it can have the meaning which everybody has in his or her mind when hearing these words. It’s about fighting against another country, against a people of a different ethnicity, etc. Secondly, there is the meaning of being at war with oneself, about not being at peace with oneself. And then, thirdly, it can mean to have to continually fight against a group of people, a gang, which harasses people you like.

The main focus of this project will be the movie “Gran Torino”, directed by Clint Eastwood, who also plays the role of the main character. We will learn about the main character, about his past and his future and we will see what life for immigrants in the U.S. is like. We will learn about the Vietnam and the Korean War and we will see how war affects people.

Please remember that this project is a big part of your grade. Not taking it serious my have severe consequences.

1	From the picture to your expectations	<p>Look at the overhead transparency. – What can you see?</p> <p>Read through the following questions and answer them all together in a short paragraph in your exercise book (max. 150 words).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What or who is (a) Gran Torino?</li><li>• Have you ever seen a film with and/ or by Clint Eastwood? If yes, in how far does this influence your expectation about the movie?</li><li>• Judging from the picture you see, the title of this project and the short text I wrote for you, what do you think this movie is about? – Do you think that it will be interesting for you? Does the picture make you curious?</li></ul>
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2	Basic information	<p>Answer the following questions while or after watching the first couple of minutes of the movie</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. What is the main character's name? _____</li><li>2. What kind of person is the main character? Write down a few words that describe his appearance and his character. _____ _____</li><li>3. What else do we learn about him? _____</li><li>4. Do you now know what a Gran Torino is? - Explain _____</li></ol>
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3	One country – many cultures	<p>After watching the next short scene, what can you say about the man's neighbors?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does he think of them?</li><li>• How is the culture described? – What can you learn about the role of the young man?</li><li>• What does the grandmother think about the old man?</li></ul>
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4	We're not in Korea	<p>Walt Kowalski seems to be at war with the people around him and maybe even with himself.</p> <p>Watch some short scenes in which Walt gets involved in the trouble in his neighborhood.</p>
5	Guessing ahead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In how far do you think that these scenes might be relevant for the movie?</li> </ul> <p>Go together in groups of 3 or 4 and discuss the question above. – Decide on one story and write down some key words. Present your idea to your classmates.</p>
6	Hmong people	<p>What did you learn about the Hmong people?</p> <p>Do you think that the Hmong and Walt Kowalski have something in common? What could it be?</p> <p>Write down some facts that you remember.</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

7	Vietnam War – Korean War	<p>You should now decide whether you want to do some research on the Vietnam War or on the Korean War. According to your interest, you then form 2 groups within your class. – The groups should be equal of size.</p> <p>You have to do some research and present the information you found. You can use the following questions as a guideline. You have to present the “<b>whole story</b>”. – Do not simply provide us with some random facts but try to tell a story why the war broke out, etc. A chronological timeline might be helpful for you as well as for your audience.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When did the war start? How long did it last? How did it end? What is the situation like nowadays? – Is the relationship between the countries involved still problematic? If yes, why?</li> <li>• Why did it start/ What was the initial problem, ...? Give some basic information on the historical background which are important for the conflict.</li> <li>• Who was involved? Why were other nations involved as well?</li> <li>• ...</li> </ul> <p>Once you have finished your research, decide on a way to present your findings. Please remember:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to find an innovative new way of presenting your information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ a brochure</li> <li>○ posters</li> <li>○ a film, a TV show</li> <li>○ a radio show</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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○ a “plot line” for the war: present each piece of important information on a separate sheet of paper and hang them up on a string across the classroom

○ ...

- You may decide on 2 or 3 people who present your project.
- You need to have more than 3 sources. One of which should NOT be an online source but a book, a magazine article, a movie, etc.
- Tell me where you took the information from. (citation)

You will have some time in class to work on your project but be aware that you will have to do most work at home.

Your presentation should be between 10 and 15 minutes. Please provide handouts.

**Date of presentation:**

Group A: Vietnam War: \_\_\_\_\_

Group B: Korean War: \_\_\_\_\_

8	“This kid doesn’t have a chance”	<p>Read this text.</p> <p>One day, Thao’s mother, Sue and Thao wait for Walt Kowalski at his porch. Sue explains that her mother wants Thao to work for Walt because he has brought dishonor over their family by trying to steal Walt’s car. At first Mr. Kowalski does not want to accept the offer but Sue, who has become a friend of Walt’s, tells him that refusing the offer would be insulting her family. The next morning, Thao comes over to Walt’s house and since Walt thinks that the boy doesn’t have any talents, he makes him count the birds in the neighbor’s tree. The day after, Thao is given a different job: First he has to repair the house of Walt’s neighbor because Walt is sick of looking at the house falling apart. Then he has to do some other jobs like removing a wasp’s nest, etc for people in their street.</p> <p>One day, Thao’s cousin drives by his car slowly and Walt, standing on his porch, watches them. He then realizes that Thao doesn’t stand a chance to stay out of trouble because his cousin will always try to get him to join his gang, which will consequently cause him to fall foul of the law.</p> <p>In order to give the boy a chance, Walt decides to get him a job in a construction company and even buys him a few tools for the beginning. Shortly afterwards, Thao’s cousin and his friends waylay him, destroy his tools and burn Thao in the face with a cigarette. When Thao gets home, he meets Walt on the street and doesn’t want to talk about it. He says that it was nothing and that Walt shouldn’t get involved; something Walt cannot do. By now, Walt obviously feels responsible for the boy and therefore decides to go to Thao’s cousin’s house. When he arrives there, he watches two of the gang members leave and then knocks on their door. The one person who stayed behind opens and Walt immediately beats him up and tells him to stay away from Thao or he will come back to end things in an ugly way.</p>
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At first, the situation seems to be cleared because Thao's cousin doesn't show up in the neighborhood for quite a while, until one evening. Walt is sitting in front of the TV, watching some sports game when he suddenly hears a car approaching his neighbor's house and people beginning to shoot at the house. He grabs his gun and goes outside to see Thao's cousin's car drive away. He goes over to the Lor's house to see if anybody was hurt, which luckily isn't the case. After a few minutes Walt finds out that Sue is not at home and he asks Thao about his sister. Thao tells him that she should be at a friend's house and calls her friends to make sure she is there. Sue is not at her friend's anymore and they are told that she had left some time ago. Walt has the feeling that something real bad is going to happen and soon his concerns are confirmed. Sue comes in, all beaten up and sexually abused.

Walt walks out of the house and destroys the furniture of his kitchen once he is back in his house. After that he sits down in an armchair in his living room and one single tear rolls down his cheek.

The next day, Thao comes over to Walt's house and wants him to take revenge for what his cousin did to his sister. Walt tells him to calm down and to plan the next step carefully. At first, Thao thinks that Walt lets him down but then he agrees to come back to Walt's house at 4 p.m. Until then, Walt mows his lawn, takes a bath, goes to the hairdresser and goes to church for confession. He confesses to the priest that he deeply regrets having never been close to his two sons. He also tells the priest that he is now at peace with himself. The priest, who of course, also knows about the incident with Sue is very concerned about what Walt is going to do and wants to talk him out of doing anything violently.

When Thao returns, Walt is cleaning his gun. He asks Thao to follow him in the basement where he shows him

		<p>the medal he got for his services in the Korean War and where Thao asks him questions about the war and how it feels to kill somebody. Walt says that killing people is something he wouldn't want Thao to experience and that it has haunted him for all his life. He locks up Thao in the basement and sets off for the gang's house. Before he leaves, he brings his dog over to the Lor's house and then calls Sue to tell her to free her brother from the basement.</p>
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9	<p>"What needs to be done will be done"</p>	<p>Do you have an idea how this movie will end? What kind of ending is most probable, considering Walt's military background and his awkward relationship with Thao and Sue?</p> <p>Go together in groups of 6 and discuss your ideas. Then, decide on one idea and present it to your classmates. – Also tell us what lead you to your idea.</p>
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10	The real ending I	Watch the real ending of the film. Try to imagine Walt's thoughts on the way over to the gang's house and write an inner monologue (min. 150 words) about it. – You have approximately 20 minutes to write your text.
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11	The real ending II	Answer the following questions by discussing them in the class <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you think about the movie?</li><li>• What do you think about what Walt did?</li><li>• Did the ending surprise you?</li><li>• Why do you think he chose to solve the conflict like this?</li><li>• What would you have done?</li></ul>
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12	Presentations	Give your presentations on the Vietnam and the Korean War.
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13	War – Gran Torino	Now that you have some information on the Vietnam and the Korean War, in how far do you think is there a link to the movie "Gran Torino"?
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## Teacher's notes

### General information:

After this project is done, the pupils should have some knowledge about the Vietnam War and the Korean War. Even though they won't be tested on it, I want them to have some insight into two wars that have and had a great impact on U.S. society. By showing them the fate of one single man, I want them to learn about the consequences of war but also about how the understanding of cultures can evolve throughout the course of time. I want them to be sensible to the problems of minority immigrant groups.

Another very important goal of this project is to show the pupils how violence can and will lead to more violence and even though I don't want them go and get shot because they want to end a violent conflict, I want to give them an example on how to stop violence about which they can talk.

This project is for a 6<sup>th</sup> grade onwards. I think that pupils in a 5<sup>th</sup> grade wouldn't take the topic serious enough or are maybe also a little bit too young to be confronted with this topic but 6<sup>th</sup> grade onwards should be fine. The language of the movie is easy to understand but the volume has to be turned up quite a lot because Clint Eastwood tends to mumble. He also uses a great deal of swear words, none of which should cause problems with the pupils' parents.

I think the minimum amount of time to be spent on this project in class is **6 lessons**:

- 1<sup>st</sup> lesson: Introduction to the project + explaining the tasks; Tasks 1 and 2
- 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson: Tasks 3, 4, 5 and 6
- 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson: Task 7: get the war-research-project started – explain it; give pupils the whole lesson to split up the work
- 4<sup>th</sup> lesson: Tasks 8 and 9
- 5<sup>th</sup> lesson: Tasks 10 and 11
- 6<sup>th</sup> lesson: Tasks 12 and 13

The handouts should not be distributed all at once. Pages 1- 3 come first, then pages 4- 5, followed by pages 6- 8. Page 9 should not be handed out before task 9 is finished because it may spoil the surprise.

### **Task 1:**

- OHT with colored picture of DVD case – page 14 of this paper
- 15'

### **Task 2:**

- Watch the movie until 8.20'
- Give pupils ~ 5 minutes time after watching the scene to answer the questions

Answers to task 2:

1. *Walt Kowalski*
2. *At the funeral of his wife. You see her casket and him standing next to it, observing the parish.*
3. *He is a grumpy kind of person. He doesn't like his two sons and he doesn't like his grandchildren's behavior at church. He is rather old, already retired.*
4. *He was at war in Korea and even got a medal. He has a dog. He doesn't like his neighbors – doesn't think very good of them. He has a vintage car – a Gran Torino – which he bought back in 1972*
5. *A Gran Torino is a vintage car and it is very dear to him.*

### **Task 3:**

- Movie: 8.30' – 11.50' – in the house of the Hmongs
- Class discussion – if there is not enough time during class, then the pupils should write a short text, answering the question (max. 150 words)

### **Task 4:**

- 23.18' – 29.43' – scene on the lawn + presents + priest
- 32.00' – 34.33' – 36.50' – scene with Sue and the boys; Sue riding in Walt's car, talking about Hmong people

### **Task 5:**

- Group discussion: 10'
- Presenting the ideas in class + talk about them: 15'

### **Task 6:**

- Pupils should do the activity by themselves and then the answers will be compared in the plenum
- Among people have fought on the side of the U.S. in Vietnam war – had to leave the country after the war was over
- a hill people
- girls go to college; boys go to jail
- if there is no time to talk about the results in class, then the pupils should only write down what they think is important and their answers will be discussed in the next lesson

### **Task 7:**

- The class has to split up in two groups. One group will deal with the Vietnam War, the other one with the Korean War. They should decide within their group on who will research what and they should also decide on how to present their findings.
- The presentations will be after the movie is finished.
- The teacher may choose to allow the pupils to work on their project during class – in the plan, there is only 1 lesson scheduled for this task but this can be changed if the teacher wants to

### **Task 8:**

- The pupils should read the summary of the movie I wrote. It should allow them to get an idea of what is happening in the scenes they don't get to watch. I think that it is necessary for them to get information about the missing scenes, because otherwise the ending would not be of any significance for them.

### **Task 9:**

- Group discussion: 10'
- Class discussion: 10' - which ending is the most probable one, why?

### **Task 10:**

- 1.39.30' until the end of the film
- The inner monologue should be written right after watching the end of the movie – there should be no in-class discussion before the writing process

because I want every pupil to write down his or her personal idea of Walt's thoughts

- Writing process: 20' – 25'; pupils shouldn't have too much time to think about what they want to write – they should simply write down the thoughts they have in that very situation

**Task 11:**

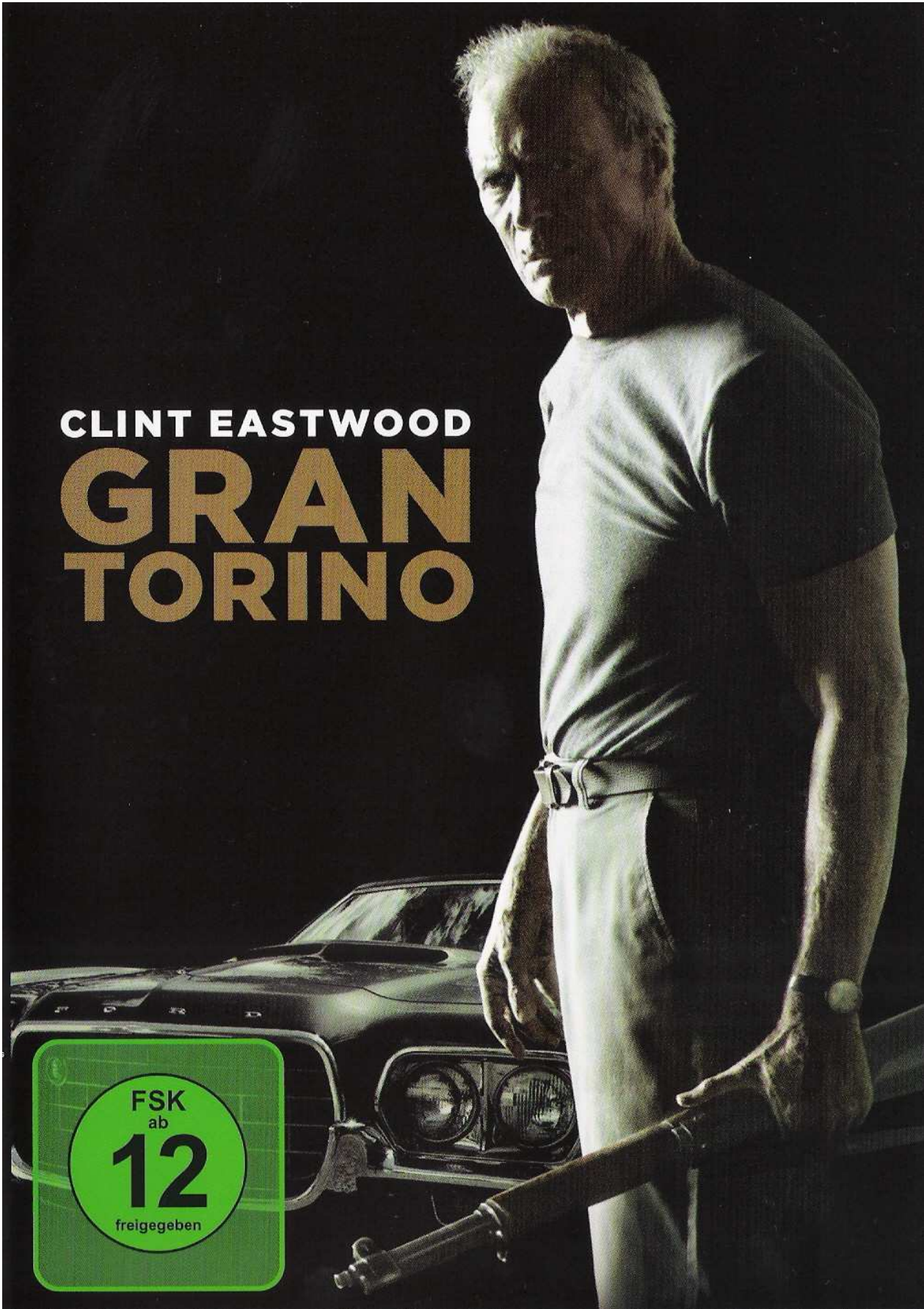
- open discussion- no time limit

**Task 12:**

- presentations

**Task 13:**

- This is a very open question because I have no idea what the students will come up with. There is also a chance that they don't see any links, which I'll also respect. Maybe a group discussion (5-6 people/ group) helps to develop some ideas.



CLINT EASTWOOD

# GRAN TORINO

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