What about Historical Fiction?

Ways to use historical fiction in an ESL-classroom setting.

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Abstract

Historical fiction is an underrepresented genre in Swedish ESL-settings. This essay shows that historical fiction can be used in numerous ways in such a setting. Historical fiction novels can be the bases for several different exercises involving speaking, reading and listening. They can also be used for more creative exercises such as roleplays. Historical fiction often tackles deep and emotional subject matters such as war, emigration/immigration and the effects of war on the everyday person. This essay argues that historical fiction can help alleviate student tensions which, in an ESL-setting stems from their diverse cultural and social backgrounds. This is important for a country such as Sweden, which has a high rate of immigration from countries at war. Presented are two teachers’ guides, one is from BBC Radio (British Broadcasting Corporation) and the other from the NEA (National Endowment of the Arts). These guides are based on two historical fiction novels, *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway and *Private Peaceful* by Michael Morpurgo. This essay shows that both teachers’ guides are well suited for work in an ESL-environment, as both research and the Swedish upper secondary school curricula for English will attest. The conclusion is that historical fiction presents several opportunities for teachers to make creative and effective exercises for their ESL-students.
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Introduction
Article databases yield a small number of results when you search for historical fiction compared to other literary genres. From this, one could assume that the genre is underrepresented in current literary and didactic research. This means that its potential value for ESL (English as Second Language) classrooms is lost. When it comes to subjects such as English, historical fiction novels can be useful as they give students a unique perspective on certain events and places that can differ from their traditional textbook counterparts. They can among other things provide a more personal and relatable view on historical events. Kathy Nawrot states that historical fiction gives the reader a look at a historical event itself as it unfolds, and the people/characters who were involved are viewed as human and changeable.

In language-based courses, such as the Swedish upper secondary school courses of English 5, 6 and 7, historical novels can act as starting points for vocabulary and other language-based exercises. They can also be used to tackle some of the common issues in ESL classrooms, such as the diversity among student backgrounds. Because of this, it is important to evaluate and examine the usage of historical fiction in ESL classrooms so that their potential value can be fully realized. The novels that this essay will focus on are A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway and Private Peaceful by Michael Morpurgo. These novels are both set during World War I. In 2014, interest in the conflict increased because of the centennial anniversary of the start of the war in 1914. Therefore, the literature chosen is still relevant today and could provide an interesting view point of this great conflict that has very much shaped the modern western world.

The purpose of the essay will be to present and analyze the value of historical fiction in ESL classrooms of Sweden. It will focus on the didactic usage of such novels in the subject of English. Guidelines from contemporary research regarding the usage of historical fiction and how it is incorporated into teaching will be presented together with excerpts from the current Swedish curricula of English. The essay will tackle common issues in ESL classrooms and how they can be alleviated through using historical fiction novels. Examples of lesson plans and exercises will be presented later in the essay. The exercises have been specifically created to be used in ESL classrooms of English, so are therefore aimed to work with some of the common issues in those classroom settings.

Selection of literature
The essay will use Ernest Hemingway’s A Farewell to Arms as well as Michael Morpurgo’s Private Peaceful as main novels. The novels were chosen because of their shared subject matter and setting, which is World War 1. This makes comparisons between the novels interesting since they present different perspectives on the same event. Morpurgo’s novel was written specifically for a younger
audience, while Hemingway’s was not. This provides a view of how they differ in the sense of which target audience they are aimed at. I also encountered Morpurgo’s novel during my practice as a teacher student; therefore, I know that the novel has been used in classrooms, at least in Sweden. A *Farewell to Arms* has been used in American schools since its creation. There are numerous teachers’ guides that are available for both novels. These teachers’ guides are aimed at both native speakers and SLA (Second Language Acquisition)-students. This makes them fruitful to analyze since they are already used in classroom settings to some extent.

I have personally used *Private Peaceful* in my teaching practice. I encountered the novel during my first work practice period, which centered around a class in the arts and crafts program in English 5. There, I put together with my supervisor a weekly reading seminar where we asked the students to read every other day of the week. We had two English lessons with each class every week. We decided to start each lesson with a reading seminar. In these seminars, discussions centered around what the students had read for that lesson. Some questions were given to the students as guidelines. The questions could be, “What happened in the part you’ve read?” or questions about specific events such as “Why do you think Charlie stayed with his brother and disobeyed orders?”. Some questions were created just so that the students would summarize what they have read, while others were more philosophical in nature. At the end of each lesson we gave the students page numbers to read. We realized that many students took it seriously and read the pages required, as they were supposed to. This tended to create some interesting discussions in which some students noticed things that others did not.

**Research questions**

The essay will use these following questions to narrow down its scope.

1. How can historical fiction be used in an ESL classroom and how is this reflected in current teachers’ guides for the novels *A Farewell to Arms* and *Private Peaceful*?

2. What are some examples of exercises that can be created from the novels for usage in a Swedish ESL Classroom of English?

**Methodology**

The analysis of the chosen novels is bipartite. The first part will be examining already existing teachers’ guides. These teachers’ guides will be compared to the research found in the literature review part of the essay. The guides will be mainly compared to the research done by Edwin G. Bilof, Kathy Nawrot as well as Mary-Taylor Rycik and Brenda Rosler. These researchers provide many examples of how and why historical fiction can be an asset for teaching. According to Nawrot, there are many benefits with historical fiction novels to teach subjects such as English. These benefits include, but are not limited
to, that they are more easily understood than regular textbooks and can provide students with a closer, more emotional experience that enhances retention of historical facts. They can also be adopted in language-based exercises, in which questions about vocabulary will naturally arise from students.\(^1\)

Nawrot, Bilof\(^2\) and Rycik and Rosler\(^3\) often use the literature as gateways to other sources of information. Nawrot states that this could be exercises in which students look outside of the novels for information surrounding their contexts. Bilof\(^4\) and Nawrot\(^5\) agree that these types of exercises help students with knowledge retention and contextualizing both the novels and real-world events presented in them. It is with this research in mind that further analysis can be made. This essay will look at what exercises are presented in the teachers’ guides and how they can be applied to Swedish Upper Secondary School classrooms of English.

Common issues and points of concern surrounding the typical ESL classroom will be presented through the articles of Susanne Gardner\(^6\), Said Muhammad Khan\(^7\) and Ernst & Richard\(^8\). The essay will attempt to show how historical fiction novels can alleviate some of the common problems of ESL classrooms while also meeting its demands for a rich learning environment for second language learners. These issues will be presented and discussed further in the literature review section. This will conclude in a statement about the importance of how and why historical fiction novels such as *Private Peaceful* and *A Farewell to Arms* could be incorporated into ESL classrooms.

**Literature Review**

Kathy Nawrot explains that historical textbooks have traditionally been written in an objective manner, in which the students are observers looking in at a distant time and place. She claims that textbooks often focus on the result of any given event, while the people within it are taken for granted.\(^9\) Historical fiction, on the other hand, gives the reader a look at the events themselves as they unfold, and the people involved are viewed as human and changeable. Therefore, historical fiction can present a more personal and close picture of certain events.\(^10\)

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1. Nawrot (‘The value of historical fiction’)
2. Bilof (‘Suggested Guidelines’)
3. Rycik and Rosler (p. 163-165)
4. Bilof, (‘The selection of The Killer Angels’)
5. Nawrot (‘Activities using historical fiction’)
6. Gardner (p. 51-53)
7. Khan (p. 49–53)
8. Ernst & Richard (p. 323-326)
9. Nawrot (‘The value of historical fiction’)
10. Nawrot (‘The value of historical fiction’)


Nawrot gives some reasons why historical fiction is an effective type of literature for teaching:

- A story is more easily understood than textbooks
- Fiction presents a more human look at events, which is often experienced as closer and more emotional to students
- Children and students more easily retain knowledge from novels. They might forget details, but an overall impression remains.
- Works of historical fiction more easily make lasting impressions on students since they produce emotional responses.
- Historical novels provide a context to which factual knowledge then can be applied.\(^\text{11}\)

According to Nawrot, there are several benefits of using historical fiction to teach literature. She argues that historical fiction often focuses on human behavior and its consequences. This in turn leads to students better understanding cause and effect when it comes to actions and events. Historical fiction furthermore presents the students with moral decisions that correspond to real-life situations and that could have real-world consequences. Historical fiction can also provide students with the sense that they are part of a greater world, in which they have a meaning and are impacted by others’ choices and decisions. This provides the students with knowledge that they are changing and creating history every day and that the choices they make today have future consequences as well as that yesterday’s history is always present with them.

Nawrot believes the teacher should always make sure that the novels are approached as stories and not as facts. Because of this, the teacher should always make sure that the students react to the story first and foremost before they look at historical context. The questions that arise from the reading should then be used for more in-depth study of the historical facts surrounding a novel’s setting.\(^\text{12}\)

Nawrot presents several diverse ways historical fiction can be used in a classroom. For example, it can examine and differentiate between historical facts and an author’s imagination. Students can determine biases and evidence of opinions in the text. From this, the students can create a picture of the author’s intent with the novel. Questions concerning vocabulary will also arise. This gives teachers as well as students a reason to study period-specific language. Everything that provides context for the novels will help the students understand more about history. The novels can provide a basis for writing exercises. This could include formal essays about people and events presented in the novels, but could

\(^{11}\) Nawrot (‘The value of historical fiction’)
\(^{12}\) Nawrot (‘Activities using historical fiction’)
Furthermore involve looking at the stories from other perspectives, such as reversing gender roles or make the characters have different cultural backgrounds. The novels can be the starting-point for more creative work. This could involve visits to museums or the students themselves creating a portrait gallery. Students could examine, and recreate arts and crafts from the period in which the novel is set.  

There are, however, potential negative sides to using historical fiction. For example, students tend not to question events in the novels. It is therefore important that the teacher pick novels that are historically accurate. The stories in the novels should represent the values of the times they present. It is a common occurrence that characters in historical fiction novels are written from a modern perspective and can therefore act unnaturally to their surroundings. It is important to be wary of stereotyping of characters. The knowledge of the teacher is important when choosing appropriate novels for students.  

According to Rycik and Rosler, historical fiction has always been a part of children’s literature. However, since 1986 there has been a significant rise in awards given to historical fiction novels. Historical fiction gives students the ability to experience places and times that they otherwise never could. They claim that historical fiction can help students understand themselves and others as part of history. Rycik and Rosler view historical fiction as a tool for creating an emotional bond between modern students and their historical counterparts. Rycik and Rosler have interviewed teachers who claim that their students find traditional textbooks too difficult and off-putting. The interview subjects find that works of historical fiction give students a greater perspective on the humans behind events, which in turn is more relatable to students as it piques their interests on another level than traditional textbooks. Rycik and Rosler give, moreover, examples of how further studies outside of the literature can be conducted. Students can, for example, research the historical accuracy of a novel using the internet, they can write online diaries and look at different websites containing information about subjects related to the novels.  

Edwin Bilof notes that there has been a recent resurgence of historical fiction in classrooms. These types of novels are often used in social studies and can offer perspective on many themes, such as multiculturalism or globalism. As an example, Bilof taught the novel *The Killer Angels* by Michael Shara, which was the basis for the movie *Gettysburg*. *The Killer Angels* is based on actual letters and stories from the Battle of Gettysburg, a pivotal battle in the American Civil War. It was deemed an informative

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13 Nawrot (‘Activities using historical fiction’)
14 Nawrot (‘Caution when using historical fiction’)
15 Rycik and Rosler (p. 163)
16 Rycik and Rosler (p. 163-165)
novel to teach, since it gives the reader a story without distorting historical facts too much. Bilof stresses that it is the novel's ability to portray the human side of the battle and the characters within it that makes it an excellent choice. 17 Bilof states that his aim was to find a way to apply historical fiction on a broader scale in social sciences subjects. By this, Bilof wanted to create interest in history by focusing on the human aspects. He used juniors from a school in the United States as subjects for the research. 18

Bilof used feedback from the students when creating the assignments for the novel. The students wanted assignments in which they could combine traditional literary subjects with social studies. The main written assignment was based on two principles: character analysis and outside research. Bilof states that an assignment created in this way will give the students ample time and room for deeper understanding of not only the characters in the novel but also of the context surrounding them. The purpose of the assignment was to make the students look closer at the personal sides of the main characters. They were referred to written biographies. The students had in many cases used non-fiction biographies to confirm what was presented in the fictional novel. All in all, the essays demonstrated that the students had the ability to use fiction together with non-fiction to a satisfactory degree in order to create an essay of this scale. 19

Bilof ends his article with some suggestions that may help teachers who wish to use historical fiction:

- Choose a novel that is compatible with the students’ reading levels. It is also important that the teacher checks the historical integrity of the novel before handing it out.
- Characters within the novels should always act as people of their own time.
- When it comes to novels, action is always preferred to inaction.
- It is preferable that the teacher picks a novel in which they themselves have an interest.
- The novel should be compatible with most, if not all, of the historical subject.
- Teachers should consider giving the novel to a test group that can represent the students who will receive the task. This can lead to valuable discussions and feedback.
- Consider using audiovisual material to complement the novel.

17 Bilof, ‘The selection of The Killer Angels’
18 Bilof, ‘The selection of The Killer Angels’
19 Bilof, ‘Results and Student Feedback’
- Teachers should pick novels that can be used for many distinct types of exercises and assignments. These assignments should focus on the human side of events and on high-level critical thinking skills.

- A student’s motivation is often based on the teacher’s interest.  

Regarding ESL classrooms specifically, Susanne Gardner writes in her article *Working toward literacy in Correctional Education ESL* that there are several areas that teachers should be aware of when working in ESL classrooms. The teacher should focus on the world as being multilingual and multicultural. Creating a classroom environment with a focus on globalization creates understanding and acceptance among the students. This also naturally enhances the students’ vocabulary through introductions to unfamiliar cultures and the vocabulary associated with them. It also helps establish an interest in international affairs among students. Gardner argues that a teacher could consider including bilingual teaching materials. Moving in from a student’s first language into a new second language could be an effective opening and therefore make the students feel more comfortable. She stresses the importance of thinking outside of the traditional listening, reading, speaking and writing box. Combining these elements instead of thinking of them as separate enhances the learning experience for the students.  

Gisela Ernst and Kerri J. Richard examine in their article *Reading and writing pathways to conversation in the ESL classroom* the key features that make an ESL classroom successful. Their article is primarily focusing on younger children without any prior knowledge of English, their findings can however be applied to any level of students. The first point is to use a thematic focus. Confining the students’ exposure of the language to certain themes makes the classroom situation and learning more controlled. The teacher, together with the students, could have open discussions and read excerpts surrounding specific topics and then move on to exercises. The second point Ernst and Richard present is that a teacher should construct a safe and constructive classroom culture together with the students.

Ernst and Richard argue that books can provide so much more than just language to the students. They can give students, who might have drastically diverse cultures and backgrounds, shared topics to talk about. This will create a sense of belonging among the students while making them feel comfortable with talking and using their language among their peers. Ernst and Richard point out that it is important

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20 Bilof (‘Suggested Guidelines’)
21 Gardner (p. 51-53)
22 Ernst & Richard (p. 323)
23 Ernst & Richard (p. 323-324)
for the teacher to read aloud to the students.\textsuperscript{24} They claim that this could help make connections between the written and oral language. It could also make the use of audio clips beneficial. In conclusion, the focus of the teacher should be to use diverse exercises that utilizes the students’ abilities to the maximum. Integrating speaking, listening, reading and writing in exercises, and not think about them as separate entities, is one of the keys to success.\textsuperscript{25}

In a study conducted on students of the HITEC University in Texila, Pakistan, Said Muhammad Khan realized in his article \textit{Influence of Speech Anxiety on Oral Communication Skills among ESL/EFL Learners} that there is great apprehension among some ESL Pakistani students when being confronted with having to speak English. Khan interviewed several students to discover the underlying factors for their fears of speaking.\textsuperscript{26} He determined from the interviews that student apprehensions were largely based on four key factors. The first were pedagogical factors, where several students reported that a stressful classroom environment was to blame. The students pointed out that in the classroom their failures were highlighted and that they felt judged. This was mostly attributed to classmates being judgmental towards one another, but could involve teachers making ‘faces’ towards them as well. The second factor was students’ different educational and socio-economic backgrounds. Higher level students found it easier to talk freely in the classroom during speaking exercises. The third was psychological factors, students naturally have diverse personality types. There was found to be a difference between the anxiety levels of extroverted students contrary to their introverted counterparts, where introverted students tended to be more apprehensive.

Another psychological factor was the student’s sense of self-confidence. These psychological factors were greatly enhanced depending on the level of rigor that was required of the student. The more the student felt that it needed to deliver correct speech, the more they tended to feel anxious. The last factors were social and cultural, the study found that students from lesser developed areas and poorer family conditions have had less prior exposure to English.\textsuperscript{27} To remedy these factors and create a successful ESL environment, Khan suggests that the classroom environment should be relaxed where students are not ridiculed for making mistakes. He stresses that the classroom and the teacher always should encourage free speech and prioritize actual speaking over rigorous correctness. Khan concludes that developing successful strategies for teaching English in a globalized world is one the most important parts of a teacher’s work.\textsuperscript{28}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{24} Ernst & Richard (p. 324)
\bibitem{25} Ernst & Richard (p. 325-326)
\bibitem{26} Khan (p. 49)
\bibitem{27} Khan (p. 51–52)
\bibitem{28} Khan (p. 53)
\end{thebibliography}
In conclusion, there are several key areas that need to be addressed to create a successful ESL learning environment. These key areas are: a focus on student-to-student relations, alleviate language related anxieties among the learners and to engage the students with a variety of exercises that engage their creativity. This essay will demonstrate that historical fiction novels can be used to address these issues. However, the essay will not make the case that historical fiction is better or worse than any other literary genre, instead it is aims to shed some light on how historical fiction can be applied in an ESL environment, as well as showcase its potential advantages. Together with research surrounding common issues and traits of an ESL targeted classroom, an analysis of how and why historical fiction could be beneficial for such a classroom environment can be made.

The Swedish Curriculum

To see what might motivate the usage of historical fiction as a teaching tool in ESL classrooms of English it is necessary to look at the current curricula in Swedish schools. For the sake of coherence, only the curricula for the Upper Secondary School (Gymnasieskolan) will be discussed. Concerning the general goals for upper secondary school- English in Sweden, Skolverket states that students should develop “the ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used.”29 This means that students should encounter perspectives different from their own. It could mean reading novels from other cultures or novels that have people from other cultures as their focus. This new perspective could even include people from different time periods in history.

Since history is often used as a means of determining identity, a teacher could use historical fiction as an introduction to other ethnical and cultural perspectives. Learning about a culture’s background and history gives a nuanced picture of that group, and therefore creates a deeper understanding of that group’s views and ethics. ESL classrooms require reflection on culture and identity because of their students’ mixed backgrounds. This is also true for the globalized world that teachers are preparing today’s students for. The need for different perspectives goes together with what Susanne Gardner discusses in her article, that a globalized and multicultural approach is most beneficial to ESL students.30 Sweden has seen a steady increase of immigration between 1965-2015, especially in the period between 1990-2015. Most of these immigrants come from conflict zones around the world. In the 1990’s it was the war in Yugoslavia that drove immigrants to Sweden, and more recently the civil war in Syria. Statistics from SCB (Statistiska Centralbyrån) show that immigrants and refugees arriving in Sweden come from diverse places, with countries such as Syria, Eritrea, Poland and India being some

29 https://www.skolverket.se/polopoly_fs/1.174542!/English%20120912.pdf (2017-04-06) 10:47
30 Gardner (p. 51–53)
of them. It would then be fair to assume that one of the top priorities of a teacher in Sweden should be to work with varying ethical and moral questions to create acceptance among students, this is doubly important since Khan’s article show that cultural and economic factors play large parts in how a student reacts to learning in ESL classrooms. Related to this, Skolverket states that subject areas related to students’ education, societal and working life; current issues; events and processes; thoughts, opinions, ideas, experiences and feelings; relationships and ethical issues, should all be included in English 5. It is apparent that discussions around culture and reflection on ethics and morality are one of the top priorities in Swedish schools. This priority may be seen as an attempt to prepare students for future relationships in a multicultural and multilingual society.

Furthermore, looking closer at the main parts of what should be included in a course of English 5 in Sweden, Skolverket states that students should be introduced to novels as well as texts with certain purposes, such as instructions and scientific texts. Students should moreover be given the means to assess and criticize elements of texts. This skill should be developed and worked on through written and oral exercises. As will be presented later in the essay, historical fiction novels can be used as a starting-point for many types of exercises that requires information outside of reading the novel. These are exercises where students will have to assess and search for information regarding the novel’s subject matter. But critique could also be aimed at the novels themselves, where students could apply different literary theories to the novels. This would be suitable for the higher and more advanced courses such as Engelska 6 or 7 where literary theories should be introduced. Literary theory is, however, outside the scope of this essay.

Presented later will be several exercises based on different upper secondary school programs. In relation to novels and literature, Skolverket states that Engelska 5 should include strategies for listening and reading in diverse ways and for different purposes. Together with the previous point made about using information outside of the novels, students could be asked to limit their research to specific types of media. This could introduce students to many types of texts such as newspaper articles, scientific texts and internet forum text, which all have different structures and vocabularies.

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32 Khan (p. 49-53)
34 https://www.skolverket.se/polopoly_fs/1.174542!/English%20120912.pdf (2017-06-05) 00:48
Plot Summaries
Since the following analysis will focus heavily on the contents of the novels there will be a short plot summary and presentation of each of the novels here.

Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms* (1929)
The story of *A Farewell to Arms* revolves around Frederic Henry, who is an ambulance driver. He is an American but has enlisted in the Italian army during World War 1. One day he meets the British nurse Catherine Barkley, with whom he becomes romantically involved. Catherine is mentally unstable during this time since she recently lost her lover to a bombing raid. Frederic is wounded and is transferred to a military hospital, in which Catherine happens to be working. Frederic is placed under Catherine’s care and their love for each other grows deeper. Catherine then reveals to Frederic that she is pregnant. Following this and after a brief battle with jaundice, Frederic returns to the Italian front. Frederic then decides during one of the battles to drive away with two little girls he finds on the side of the road. He also picks up two other men. The ambulance becomes stuck in the mud and when one of the men refuses to help free the car, Frederic kills him. Frederic eventually escapes the front and crashes his ambulance in a nearby river. He then boards a train bound for Milan. He eventually meets Catherine again and they begin a committed relationship in a small town outside of Milan. One night, Catherine goes into labor and delivers a still-born child. She dies soon after as well. The novel ends with Frederic slowly walking back to his hotel room.

The story focuses on the two brothers Thomas (Tommo) and Charlie Peaceful. The story begins with Thomas lying in a barn in wartime Belgium reminiscing about his life. He recounts his childhood, starting with his first day at school and the death of his father. His father was killed by a falling tree, which resulted in the brothers living with only their mother. Thomas and Charlie also have a handicapped brother whom they call Big Joe. During his first day at school, Thomas becomes friendly with a girl called Molly. Eventually, Charlie falls in love with Molly, which they keep a secret from Thomas because of their fear of hurting him. Thomas has on other occasions confessed his love for Molly, but she tells him that he is immature and not ready for a relationship. Molly eventually becomes pregnant with Charlie’s child. When all this unravels for Thomas and Charlie, World War 1 breaks out. They immediately decide to enter the army, to the dismay of their mother. One day, Thomas is severely wounded and ends up in a ditch in the middle of no-man’s-land. Charlie stays with him and therefore defies the orders given by his sergeant to attack the German trenches. This leads to Charlie being court-martialed and convicted of treason and cowardice. Charlie is executed by firing squad for his crime. The story ends with Thomas being determined to take care of Charlie and Molly’s baby. The novel ends
with the statement that 306 people were executed for crimes such as cowardice and desertion. They were pardoned in 2006 by the British government.

Discussion/Analysis
How can historical fiction be used in Swedish ESL classrooms and how is this reflected in current teachers’ guides for the novels *A Farewell to Arms* and *Private Peaceful*?

For *A Farewell to Arms*, the NEA (National Endowment for the Arts) Big Read’s teachers’ guide will be used. The National Endowment for the Arts was created in 1965 and is a United States federal government run agency with a focus on providing support for the arts and the development of American culture. NEA’s Big Read program aims to introduce contemporary literature to new readers. The main purpose is to give readers introductions to different perspectives and experiences they claim can be found in novels.\(^{35}\) This aim fits with what Swedish ESL classrooms are trying to achieve. It is important that students in an ESL classroom environment feel a connection to one another and that they, because of their mixed cultures and backgrounds can learn to accept and relate to one another. This kind of thinking is highlighted in the Swedish curricula for English.

NEA’s teachers’ guide for *A Farewell to Arms* is divided into four different sections. These are: a thematic focus, discussion activities, writing exercises and finally homework assignments. The guide incorporates a wide range of different activities in the different sections, similarly to the suggested exercises found in Nawrot’s article, in which she states that historical fiction can provide a basis for many activities such as vocabulary and writing exercises surrounding themes and related topics.\(^{36}\) The guide also correlates to the way Bilof uses his novel.\(^ {37}\) The thematic focus of some of the exercises are beneficial to an ESL classroom according to Ernst and Richard. This helps limit the language to specific themes and categories, which in turn makes it easier for the students to recognize situations where the usage of the language is appropriate and needed.\(^ {38}\) Finally, the NEA guide provides what they call ‘Capstone Projects’, which are larger projects or essays that can be used as a conclusion to the work with the novel.

The lesson plans themselves are divided into ten separate lessons, each of which are divided into three various parts. The three parts are discussion-based activities, writing exercises and homework. These discussion-based activities could be an opportunity for the teacher to deploy some of Khan’s techniques to promote an open discussion space where students can feel safe to use their language.

\(^{35}\) [http://www.neabigread.org/about.php](http://www.neabigread.org/about.php) (2017-04-12) 11:15

\(^{36}\) Nawrot (‘Activities using historical fiction’)

\(^{37}\) Bilof (‘Structuring the Assignment’)

\(^{38}\) Ernst & Richard (p. 323-324)
It is important that the teacher always encourages free speech and prioritize actual speaking over language correctness.

The first lesson of the guide is focused on the biography of the author, Ernest Hemingway. NEA states in the teachers’ guide that examining an author’s life can inform and expand the reader’s understanding of a novel. The guide then gives a brief presentation of Hemingway’s life and how he was affected by World War I. The discussion activity associated with this lesson involves reading three texts. These texts are handouts to be given to the students. These include a more in-depth biography of Hemingway and his writing style, a text about World War 1 and a text about Modernism. The students are then divided into groups and asked to read one of the texts. They are then asked to give presentations on what they have learned from the texts. They are even encouraged to make creative twists to their presentations to make them more memorable. Using the students’ creativity is one of cornerstones of a successful ESL classroom, according to Gardner. Putting a creative twist on a presentation could, as discussed in Gardner’s article, entail using various kinds of media, such as film and audio clips. The writing exercise for the chapter involves the students being asked to write a continuation of their own as an imaginary chapter two. They are here encouraged to use their creative writing skills and to make further research into the landscape or main character of the novel.

The rest of the lessons discuss culture, history, narration, symbols and themes, to name a few. The Capstone Projects presented at the end of the guide gives some examples of essay topics or suggestions on further studies. These include writing a short story in which the students expand the backstory of the main character, creating a letter that Frederic sends to his parents after the end of the novel, creating a photo gallery using pictures of Hemingric and the novel from magazines during the time of publication, roleplaying scenes from the novel and finally researching outside of the novel to find out more on the era around the 1920’s and World War 1. It becomes clear that the teachers’ guide creates opportunities for students to use their language in a multitude of ways. Many of these techniques such as, thematic language focus and engaging the students’ creativity are established ways of creating a successful ESL classroom.

The teachers’ guide focuses mainly on having students do research of topics from the novels using other means than just reading the book. Making the students research surrounding topics to gain a closer understanding of the novel is something that seems to be a recurring exercise. For example, the guide focuses mainly on the main character and how many exercises can be based on rewriting

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39 Gardner (p. 51–53)
contexts for him to create different outcomes and circumstances. Nawrot discusses the human aspect of a historical novel when she states that historical fiction often presents the students with a look at the people behind historical events. Creating believable backstories for characters can possibly help the students reflect on how people behaved in the past and what their motivations and goals in life were. This is a perfect example of how an exercise can create an understanding of moral and ethics among students. By giving the students the opportunity to really relate to a character, they will understand that character’s motives better. The teacher could then draw parallels between the character and real-life situations and events. By engaging the students’ creative side in an exercise like this, a student could perhaps draw inspiration from their own life and therefore expose some of their background. This gives them an opportunity to use their language while also relating to one another and become closer, both of which are pillars of creating a successful ESL classroom according to both Gardner and Ernst & Richard. An exercise like this is open to the usage of various kinds of media such as audio clips and movies. Students could even make short film-clips of their own, as roleplaying is suggested above.

With Khan’s article in mind, a teacher could use roleplaying to force students out of their normal cultural and social boundaries. When a student enters a role a more open discussion could be conducted between students. Roleplaying characters might make them put aside thoughts of cultural our social differences and instead concentrate on speaking and playing the role. Exercises such as these will also require detailed knowledge about the characters and their setting. To make participation in the exercises believable the students not only have to identify Frederic’s emotional state at the end of the novel, but they will also need to know about the world around Frederic. These exercises then certainly provide for the ground pillars of working in an ESL classroom which are creating empathy and understanding among the students while also giving them an opportunity to create and use their language in a variety of ways. Gardner specifically states that teachers should move away from thinking about language learning as separate entities of listening and writing in ESL classrooms. A teacher could also in this case pick audio clips or film-clips to create a better picture of what life was like during the era, which in turn would give the students a clearer picture of what they are writing about. An exercise like this is easily modifiable to accommodate speaking, listening and reading if, for example, the students were to present their letters to their peers. In conclusion, the teachers’ guide applies several learning/teaching techniques. With exercises ranging from roleplaying to writing and reading, the novel itself together with this teachers’ guide would prove a powerful learning tool in an ESL setting.

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41 Nawrot (‘The value of historical fiction’)
42 Gardner (p. 51–53)
43 Ernst & Richard (p. 323–324)
For *Private Peaceful*, the BBC Radio’s teachers’ guide will be analyzed. These exercises are aimed at children in the ages of 9 – 12. The set of lessons comes with an accompanying radio program in which the novel in its entirety can be listened to in the form of a radio stage play. The radio program concurs with The Swedish ESL curriculum about students being introduced to different forms of text and media. Gardner, furthermore, finds that using various kinds of media in an ESL classroom is greatly beneficial to the students.\(^{44}\) Ernst and Richard, too, recognize the importance of using audio material. They claim that this helps students make connections between the written and oral language.\(^{45}\) In addition, Bilof suggests that the use of audiovisual material could benefit the overall experience.\(^{46}\) This makes this novel special since it has been converted to both a feature-length movie as well as the previously mentioned radio stage play.

The guide begins with an introduction of the author of the novel, Michael Morpurgo. It gives some background of Morpurgo’s own experiences of war, especially the Second World War. The guide then refers to the national curriculum for English in Great Britain. It states that students should be introduced to increasingly difficult novels that include different literary styles. Students should also learn to make comparisons between novels and learn to identify different literary themes and conventions.\(^{47}\) The goals set here are not much different from the ones presented in Sweden. As stated earlier, the Swedish curriculum states that students should be introduced to novels as well as texts with certain purposes, such as instructions and scientific texts. Students should also be given means to assess and criticize elements of the texts. This should be developed and worked on through written and oral exercises.\(^{48}\)

The guide explains that students should check whether what they have read make sense to them by going through a check-list found on the page. They are there encouraged to discuss their understanding of the novel with peers as well as exploring the meaning of unfamiliar words in certain contexts. They are also encouraged to ask questions to further their understanding of the novel. Students should be able to draw conclusions from characters’ actions within the novels. Again, we see a focus on giving students the ability to analyze the characters within the novel. The students should moreover be able to distinguish between what is fact and what is fiction. This can be done through the

\(^{44}\) Gardner (p. 51-53)
\(^{45}\) Ernst & Richard (p. 323-324)
\(^{46}\) Bilof (‘Suggested Guidelines’)
usage of non-fiction sources. The utilizing of non-fiction sources is similar to the previous teachers’ guide. The focus is on character ethics and morality, fact vs. fiction checking and researching outside of the novel on larger projects. The requirements and the suggestions for what the students should practice show similarities to those presented by Bilof. He believes that an instructor should always pick novels that can be used for many distinct types of exercises and assignments. Bilof further highlights that it is important that the teacher checks the historical integrity of the novel before handing it out.

The guide provides plot summaries for every chapter of the novel as well as gives suggestions on discussion topics and further exercises. In this respect, the guide is similar to the one for A Farewell to Arms, since they both provide a chapter-to-chapter synopsis and then follow up with suggested exercises. The most interesting part of the BBC guide is that at the end, where it provides several different topics and exercises for further studies. These exercises are divided into several sub-categories, such as debate and discussion, writing, history, poetry, drama, citizenship and rights and PSHE (Personal, social and health education). These topics provide a wide variety of exercises that will help the students form a greater understanding of not just the novel itself, but also the world and history in which it is set. When giving students the opportunity to research and examine such topics, many of which are very much hot topics today, the teacher gives the students an idea and understanding of history and culture. This is what Susanne Gardner highlights in her article. She points out that one of the most important parts of a teacher’s work in an ESL classroom is to create a sense of understanding and acceptance among the students. This is mainly achieved by learning and discussing culture and history that relates to the students.

The discussion topics of the teachers’ guide include several various parts in which students should look at characters’ memories, which play a big part in the novel. There are also themes of loyalty, fair-play and analysis of the novel’s historical accuracy. Ernst and Richard argue in their article that discussing topics of friendship and loyalty could make the students develop deeper connections to one another. Discussing topics that all students can relate to in one way or another creates a forum where everyone in the classroom feels comfortable talking. It is important to bring forth topics of discussion that most students can relate to, this will engage them in talking despite having diverse cultural or language-related backgrounds. Khan agrees that it is through the elimination of cultural and social-economic differences, that would otherwise hinder students from talking, that a successful ESL environment can

50 Gardner (p. 51-53)
51 Ernst & Richard (p. 323-324)
52 Ernst & Richard (p. 324)
be created. The discussion part of the BBC guide furthermore suggests looking at the biographical background of the author, which is similar to the NEA’s guide for A Farewell to Arms.

In conclusion, both teachers’ guides incorporate several of the suggested topics and exercises provided in the literature review. They provide opportunities for the students to approach the novels in several diverse ways. They also give students opportunities to look at related topics of interest to the novels. Both guides stress the importance of reaching beyond the novels to gain a deeper understanding of the setting and the world in which the novels are set. This can especially be seen in the BBC guide, which provides a slew of topics related to the novels. They also demonstrate the importance of making the students understand the actions and thoughts of the characters. The teachers’ guides’ focus on character development and making students understand their ethics and morality could be beneficial for students in an ESL classroom setting. This also applies to exercises where students are asked to rewrite and ‘put themselves in the shoes’ of some of the characters. A teacher could use this to tackle difficult subject matters that might be part of some students’ past. The importance of exercises like this cannot be stressed enough when working in an ESL classroom. It is important that teachers examine and make students ready for a globalized world with lots of different people with lots of diverse backgrounds. It is doubly important for a country such as Sweden where immigration is relatively high and integration is a high priority.

Concerning the Swedish curriculum for the upper secondary course of English 5, Skolverket states that the course should give students the ability to discuss and reflect on living conditions, social issues and cultural features in different contexts and parts of the world where English is used. Both teachers’ guides reflect this very well and are therefore suitable for a Swedish ESL classroom. Furthermore, Skolverket states that students should be introduced to novels as well as texts with certain purposes, such as instructions and scientific texts. In addition, students should be given the means to assess and criticize elements of texts, which should be developed and worked on through written and oral exercises. The guides provide several examples of exercises, both written and oral that could help students of an ESL classroom to broaden and deepen their understanding of the novels as well as their world around them. This further cement their usage in an ESL classroom of English in Swedish schools.

53 Khan (p. 51)
What are some examples of exercises that can be created from the novels for usage in a Swedish ESL Classroom of an Upper Secondary School?

Both novels are set during World War 1. *A Farewell to Arms* continues into the 1920s, which provides an opportunity to discuss the interwar period. Both novels have fictional characters set in a non-fictional world, which is a prerequisite for them to be counted as historical fiction. The novels also focus on the human side of the conflict. There are very few actual battle or action scenes, but instead there are plenty of human interactions, which develop the characters’ relation to the world around them. Both Nawrot and Bilof state that the most important thing that separates historical fiction from their traditional textbook counterparts is their focus on the more human side of history. A negative side of this could be that neither of the two novels offer any depictions of historical figures of the time.

Neither of the novels are written in dense prose or with any complicated language. Hemingway has always been famous for writing straightforward and non-complicated prose, while Michael Morpurgo is an already established and well-known author for younger audiences, with famous novels such as *War Horse* behind him. This makes both novels suitable for usage in an ESL classroom of English 5, 6 or 7. *A Farewell to Arms* is already a well-established novel in English courses in the United States and has been since the novel was published in 1929. It is interesting that the novel was written so close to the actual war and by a person with personal experience of it. Hemingway was himself an ambulance driver in the war.

**Exercises for ESL English**

Both novels can be used in first language acquisition (FLA) as well as in second language acquisition (SLA). The exercises here, however focus primarily on Swedish ESL classrooms of English 5, 6 and 7. As seen earlier in the teachers’ guides, the novels are thought to be aimed at children in the ranges of 9-12, while Hemingway’s novel could be considered more appropriate for older students. Because of Hemingway’s well-known ‘iceberg’ style of writing, which means that while he often wrote simple and apparently straightforward prose, it was filled with underlying meanings and themes open for interpretation and discussion; this is ideal for creating discussion exercises where talking would be the focus. Since both novels are works of historical fiction it is hard not to create overlapping exercises. In this case, there could be room for subject cooperation between History and English if such can be achieved. Some example exercises are presented in the next parts.

56 Nawrot (‘The value of historical fiction’)
57 Bilof, (‘The selection of The Killer Angels’)
This following exercise will focus mainly on character analysis and writing. An exercise featuring analysis of characters together with writing engages the students creatively, while also making them relate to and think deeper about the characters. Both Tommo (*Private Peaceful*) and Frederic (*A Farewell to Arms*) are great characters to work with. In Tommo’s case, there could be, a further evaluation of the novel’s ending. Since the ending is quite open for discussion the students could be asked to write a continuation of the novel. This would incorporate evaluation of the novel since students need to be aware of and discuss the relationships between Molly, Charlie and Tommo to make the continuation believable. What we know is that Tommo swears to take care of Molly’s and Charlie’s unborn child. Questions raised to encourage such writing could be:

- How will life be when Tommo returns home?
- How will Molly deal with her grief after Charlie’s execution?
- How is life for the characters of the novel when Charlie is gone and the baby is born?
- What happens to the other characters such as Tommo and Charlie’s mother and the Lieutenant as well as Big Joe?
- How does Tommo cope with being back from the war?

These are all questions that relate to the characters themselves; they therefore limit the range of the exercise to the English subject. This also incorporates both evaluation and closer examination of the text. This will engage the students creatively, which is one of the cornerstones of a good ESL classroom. The goal of the exercise will be to produce believable results. Anyone could make up a story about how the novel ends with little to no knowledge, but in this case the focus will be on whether students have understood the relationships and the characteristics of the people in the novel.

A similar exercise could be done with *A Farewell to Arms*. The novel also has an open ending. Frederic walks back to his hotel and it is not clear what he is going to do. It is implied that he of course is depressed about Catherine and his child dying in the hospital. Several questions could be raised from the ending that could encourage further exploration of the character of Frederic such as:

- What will he do when he returns to the hotel?
- Will he drink himself to death?
- How will the rest of his life play out if he does not commit suicide?
- How will he cope with the memories of the war?
These are all questions that certainly could pique the interest of students. This is also an exercise that could be adapted for various levels of courses since the questions can be modified. An exercise like this could also be modeled to fit both oral and written formats. The questions could easily be discussed in groups or together as a class. They could also be done in writing. One of the benefits of writing, contrary to discussion exercises, is that they give the students more room to express themselves without worrying about the opinions of their peers. There are moral and ethical dilemmas to take into consideration as an ESL teacher. Subjects such as war, alcoholism and suicide are very real to some people and there will certainly be cases where students have come into real contact with some of these subjects in their lives. It is up to the teacher to evaluate and feel if it is appropriate to talk about some subjects. However, historical fiction novels can be used to tackle these difficult subjects in a subtle manner. With many immigrant students stemming from countries that have been or currently are at war there is room for these novels to discuss and evaluate the lives of people in those situations. This in turn might give students a greater understanding and acceptance of immigrants and refugees. This could mainly be done by drawing parallels between the characters in the novels and current events.

A teacher could also emphasize the fact that the novels stem from different backgrounds. A Farewell to Arms was written by an American author while Private Peaceful was written by a British author. This could result in the language of the novels being somewhat different. There are some differences in vocabulary between the United States and British dialects of English, for example truck (Am) vs lorry (Br). Another aspect that could be used in this manner is the fact that Private Peaceful was written in 2003 while A Farewell to Arms was written in 1929. This could also lead to some differences in language and vocabulary. According to Nawrot58, questions regarding vocabulary will arise in the context of historical fiction. This gives teachers as well as students a reason to study period-specific language. This could involve themes, characters and conflicts. Studies of period-specific language for World War 1 could include words such as trenches, rifle, grenade, bomb, artillery, cavalry, officer, machine-gun and so on. Students could also be asked to present the teacher with words they found difficult when reading. The teacher can then together with the students form a vocabulary bank of words specifically for that novel. A bank of words such as this could be helpful for the teacher when considering giving the novels to other students. There are many possible exercises that can be created to show the differences between American and British English. One of these exercises could simply be that the teacher picks out words for the students who then could look for a counterpart in the other dialect. Some possible words could be:

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58 Nawrot (‘Activities using historical fiction’)
Truck – Lorry
Candy – Sweets
Aluminum – Aluminium

Another exercise could be to make a game out of unfamiliar vocabulary items. Students tend to be engaged and active in game-like exercises. An exercise in which half of one class reads one of the novels while the other half reads the other could produce interesting results. In such a case, the teacher could divide the class into British and American teams. A similar exercise could be done with students who have read both novels. With these teams in place, each of the teams could be provided with vocabulary stemming from their respective countries. These words can be selected from the novels. Each of the teams could then tell each other about what individual words they have found relating to their own language. This could then be turned into a quiz in which each of the teams who are now specialized in each of their languages can identify specific words from sentences. The teacher could then pick words or sentences and make it a game to quickly identify these words and/or phrases. Vocabulary could include period-specific vocabulary found in the novels. It could also relate to World War 1 and wartime-specific words. Game-like exercises could be beneficial to students because they are less serious in nature than regular conversational exercises and could therefore lessen speaking apprehensiveness. Khan points out that speaking exercises and discussion always should focus on actual speaking and not rigorous correctness, this is where game-like, fun exercises could be beneficial.59

Examples of more concrete lesson plans based on the exercises found in the analysis. These lesson plans could suit any class of English 5-6-7 in a Swedish ESL Classroom.

A Farewell to Arms/Private Peaceful

A perquisite for the lesson plans presented here is that the students already have finished reading the novel. The novel could be read alongside other lessons during a 5-6-week period of reading around 50 pages per week. The reading will have to be done outside of the other lessons, but class time could be devoted to reading also. Reading is a very practical supplement to lessons since novels can be read whenever there is downtime from other exercises.

Lesson 1. (60 Minutes) (English)

1. Discussion about the novel. (10-15 Minutes)

59 Khan (p. 53)
The students will benefit from a quick discussion about the novel at the start of the lesson. This will help them recap what they have read as well as present questions about topics unclear to them. The more time students must reflect on the novel, the more it will benefit the coming exercises. This discussion could also feature some reflections on plausible scenarios to write about in the next part. Incorporation of some of the discussions around friendship and loyalty discussed earlier in the essay could be done here. There could be time to show some other types of media regarding the novels, such as a short clip of the film version of Private Peaceful. These discussions could be longer or shorter depending on the length of the lesson and how willing the students are to talk. A teacher should however always coax the students into talking, this could be done by picking themes or topics from the novels that most students can relate to. This is mentioned in more detail in the analysis part of the essay. It is also important to remember the techniques and tips Khan presents in his article when using discussions.

2. Start of writing exercise (45 Minutes)

With the discussion being over and done with, the main exercise can be introduced. The main exercise will be that the students should write a continuation of the ending using the questions that were presented in the analysis part of the essay. The students may choose one of the topics themselves, which could for example be to write about what Frederic does when he gets back to the hotel. How will the rest of his life play out? The teacher can provide example scenarios like those in the analysis to guide the students. This will most likely be needed to not overwhelm the students. The paper should of course be written in broad terms and not depict Frederic’s day-to-day life for the rest of his life.

The exercise could be handed in, presented orally in groups or in front of the class. If the students are not finished during the lesson provided to them, they could finish writing outside of school-time. This exercise also presents opportunities for the students to use other kinds of media. They could present a roleplay, record audio-clips or create a short film, to name a few. More time than one lesson might be needed for some of the latter examples. A teacher could see this as an opportunity for the students to work in groups and get to know each other.

Lesson plan 2.

This is a presentation of the game-exercise found in the analysis. This exercise will focus on vocabulary. As stated in the analysis, there are many possibilities of which vocabulary items to focus on. The essay presents two different sets of vocabularies that can be chosen. The first one focuses on the fact that
the novels are written in different countries. *Private Peaceful* is British, while *A Farewell to Arms* is North American. This could allow for discussions about the differences between the two dialects. This does not necessarily have to focus on vocabulary found in the novels, as stated in the analysis. The second set of vocabularies comes directly from the novels. This could center on specific topics such as war related vocabulary. Many different game-like exercises can be created, one such example is presented here.

**Lesson 1. (60 Minutes) (English)**

**Preparations (10 Minutes)**

Ten minutes should be enough to divide the class into two or more groups. Smaller groups could be more beneficial since they allow closer interaction between students. It comes, however at the cost of limiting discussions to fewer people within the groups.

**The game itself (45-50 Minutes)**

The game itself can be done in many different forms. One could be that the teacher presents the class with explanations or synonyms to the words he or she is looking for. Each group will be competing over which one answers the fastest. An American vs. British English competition could be that the teacher has given the students vocabulary beforehand. Then the teacher divides the class into and American and British groups. Like the previous exercise, the groups can only give vocabulary answers from their given language. So, for example, if the teacher is looking for the word Chips (Am)/Crisps (GB), the teacher would explain what the object is and then let the students figure it out. Points only go to the groups that answer correctly using their given language. This could be an exercise to finish up reading the novels in a fun manner.

The exercises could be adapted to various levels of English based on what courses they are used in. A teacher could pick more or less difficult vocabulary and/or shorten the time for the students to answer. It is up to the teacher to make sure the exercises correspond to the levels of the students and the course. For higher-level students, there are greater expectations of their presented texts and vocabulary.

**Conclusion**

The first part of the essay presented current teachers’ guides and why they could be used in a Swedish ESL classroom of English. These guides satisfied many of the criteria found in the Swedish curricula of English. The teachers’ guides that were presented made use of many diverse types of exercises. These were writing, listening, speaking as well as vocabulary exercises to name a few. Many of the exercises are modular and could be changed to use any of these forms of teaching. One of the main focuses of
English in the Swedish curriculum is that students should be introduced to diverse types of English texts and how to use them in their everyday speech. Historical fiction novels can certainly act as starting points for using almost any other kind of media. A teacher could use audio-clips, film-clips, power-points and so on. Students could themselves be asked to create and use various types of media in their research about or around the novels.

Skolverket greatly focuses on looking at the living conditions and cultures of other parts of the English-speaking world. Interpretation of content and usage of the language are key, Historical fiction novels can certainly provide for this. The novels presented in this essay can be used for investigations of historical living conditions as well as current cultural phenomena. From a history perspective, they provide information on historical living conditions. The teachers’ guides provide examples of exercises that utilize these perspectives. The teachers’ guides presented here could therefore be applied in a Swedish ESL Classroom.

The second research question was to examine how Private Peaceful and A Farewell to Arms could be used in Swedish ESL classrooms. The conclusion is that the novels can serve and introduce several different topics and exercises, with examples such as vocabulary and writing exercises in English. The exercises were based on rewriting parts of the novels or use parts of the novels to create new scenarios. The novels provide several different starting points for teachers in that they share some themes but differ in other ways.

The novels provide opportunities to look at period-specific language as well as the differences between American and British English. The novels may introduce and tackle difficult moral and ethical questions that might arise because of students’ mixed backgrounds in an ESL classroom. This can be worked with through discussion based activities about subjects familiar to the students, such as friendship, love and morality, which are all found in the novels. The suggested activities may build a foundation of understanding and relatability between the students in the classroom and society at large, while also making the students feel safe and confident about their language. A major concern for the exercises found in the essay is building student relations while focusing heavily on creativity and usage of different forms of language in addition, the novels can act as basis for creating new stories for the characters in the novels in History. These stories, contrary to exercises with a language focus, should focus more on the contexts of the novels and not the characters themselves. The aim here is to provide plausible scenarios based on the novels. Here students will be required to research further on certain topics. In conclusion, the value of using historical fiction novels should not be understated. Using the novels in an ESL classroom can certainly provide new perspectives for students where traditional textbooks cannot. They can be the basis of several diverse types of exercises, and may be inspired by
teaching-guides such as the ones discussed in this essay. Whether the students are in practical program or a theoretical one, historical fiction novels can certainly be used for both. The only limitations are those of the teacher when creating and using the novels for exercises.
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