

DRONE



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DRONE

Directed by Tonje Hessen Schei

2014 | Norway | 79 min & 58 min

Guide based on 79-minute version

TEACHER'S GUIDE

This guide has been designed to help teachers and students enrich their experience of *Drone* by providing support in the form of questions and activities. There are a range of questions that will help teachers frame discussions with their class, activities for before, during and after viewing the film, and some weblinks that provide starting points for further research or discussion.

The Film

Inside the secret CIA drone war. Intimate stories from the war on terror. People living under drones in Pakistan and drone pilots struggling with killing through joysticks in the US. The film covers diverse and integral ground from the recruitment of young pilots at gaming conventions and the re-definition of "going to war" to the moral stance of engineers behind the technology, the world leaders giving the secret "green light" to engage in the biggest targeted killing program in history, and the people willing to stand up against the violations of civil liberties and fight for transparency, accountability and justice. This is just the beginning. In the midst of fast advancement of technology and lagging international legislation the film shows how drones change wars and possibly our future.

Source: <http://www.dronethedocumentary.com>

The Filmmaker

Tonje Hessen Schei is an award-winning documentary filmmaker who has worked with independent documentary production since 1996. Her films focus on human rights, the environment and social justice. Tonje directed and produced *Play Again* and *Independent Intervention*, both of which have won several international awards. The films have been screened on all continents in over 100 countries, and are used by schools and universities globally. In the United States, Tonje worked for ENG (Electronic New Group, LA) and she was co-distributor and the researcher for documentaries *All Power to the People!* (1997) and *Downwinders* (2000). In Norway, she worked for the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation NRK (2005-2006). Tonje was the festival director of Human Rights Human Wrongs (2011), Scandinavia's sole documentary film festival that focuses only on human rights. Tonje started Ground Productions in 2005, an international documentary production company based in Portland, Oregon, and Oslo, Norway.

Source: <http://www.dronethedocumentary.com>

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VIEWING THE FILM WITH STUDENTS

The following three sub-sections are intended to provide you with a range of Pre-Viewing, Viewing and Post-Viewing activities. They are followed by a set of questions based upon the film's larger thematic domains, some follow-up questions and quotations, sample curricular outcomes and a page of weblinks for further investigation.

Pre-Viewing Activities

Show students the trailer for *Drone* (<http://www.dronethedocumentary.com>), as well as the film's poster (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt3801730/>). Have students work in pairs or small groups to try to identify themes or ideas conveyed by the trailer and poster.

Ask students what they know about drones. What are they used for? Have they ever seen a drone, and what are their impressions of drones?

Ask students if they have heard about Waziristan, as well as what they know about Pakistan. You may wish to have students research additional information on Waziristan and/or Pakistan.

Have students create a KWL chart for some or all of the following terms, which will provide a context for viewing the film: (a) drone, (b) Ground Zero, (c) September 11, 2001, (d) war on terror, (e) Al Qaeda, (f) war crime, (g) the Milgram Experiment, (h) PTSD, (i) Creech Air Force Base and (j) Guantanamo Bay.

Print several of the questions or quotations from the Extensions Activities section of this guide onto individual sheets of paper. Have students work in small groups or with partners to discuss if they agree with the ideas.

Viewing Activities

Have students complete the PBS viewing guide on documentaries (<http://www.pbs.org/pov/docs/Copies%20of%20Viewing%20Guide.pdf>). Students can revisit their completed documents as a Post-Viewing Activity.

Have students jot down three to five ideas for discussion, or questions that the film raises in their minds. As an Extension and/or Post-Viewing Activity, students can enter their questions into an online response or polling system and can

vote on the questions or issues they would like to explore in further detail. Encourage students to use multiple levels of Bloom's Taxonomy.

Stop the film at various points and have students provide summaries at each point.

Pause the film at 00:17:17 (00:12:30 in the 58-minute version) to have students read and reflect on the CIA Drone War Casualty Estimates from 2004-2013. How many people were killed? How many people were injured? Consider the number of high-profile militants, children, civilians and unknown casualties in this set of statistics, and discuss as a class. You may wish to supplement this information with Out of Sight, Out of Mind, an interactive infographic of the drone strike victims in Pakistan (<http://drones.pitchinteractive.com>).

Post-Viewing Activities

Ask students for their takeaway: what is this film about, in one sentence? Have students share their takeaways in pairs or small groups, and then as a class. What are the similarities and differences between the students' takeaways? You may also wish to enter all of the takeaways into a word-cloud generator, such as Wordle (<http://www.wordle.net>), to see the frequency of certain words used by students in their takeaways.

Discuss with students their initial reactions to the film. Did their feelings evolve over the course of the film?

Have students consider their perceptions of drones before and after viewing the film. Were their perceptions affected at all? Using this as a prompt, have students write a two-paragraph response.

Have students conduct a search for "drones" using Google News. In addition to warfare, how else are drones currently being used? Are there other anticipated uses for drones?

In the film, Lt. Col. Bryan Callahan asks, "What does make the best candidate for unmanned airplanes, and how do we identify these people early?" Have students research "unmanned aircraft systems operator" on Goarmy.com (<http://www.goarmy.com/> Click on Careers & Jobs, then search for "unmanned aircraft systems operator"). Individually or as a class, have your students read through the job description. What are their first impressions of the job description? After viewing the film, how would your students modify the job description, if at all? Students may also wish to answer Callahan's questions.

In the film, drone-attack survivor Zubair Ur Rehman says, "When we hear the sound of the drone, we get scared. We can't work, play or go to school. It is only when it is cloudy we don't hear the drones." When his family comes to the US, he tells people, "I no longer love blue skies." Have students reflect on his statements in a written response.

In the film, a reporter talks to Brandon Bryant and says, "Imagine this—killing more than 1,500 enemies in war without ever stepping foot on the battlefield.... What is it like being in a bunker with a screen in front of you and a few buttons to push, and killing someone half a world away?" It is also suggested in the film that "distance creates indifference." In pairs or small groups, have students discuss these questions and quotations, and consider how they would feel if they were an unmanned aircraft systems operator. Are there other situations where distance creates indifference?

Have students discuss post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as it is presented in the film. Based on examples from the film, what are some of the short-term and long-term effects of PTSD? Who does PTSD affect?

In the film, Andrew Feinstein comments, "War is an unbelievably profitable business." During one class, have students conduct research on the profits of war and those individuals or groups who benefit from these profits. They may wish to examine how various wars have been profitable over the course of the last century. Are there any financial benefits to long-term war, and what are the implications of this? After students have completed their research, take an additional class to share and discuss their findings.

In the film, Chris Woods asks, "How protected are these regular Air Force personnel from potential prosecution for war crimes?" Have students investigate this question in pairs.

Close to the end of the film, children aim slingshots at a drone. Have students step into the role of the children and reflect on this scene in a diary entry.

Have students participate in a Socratic discussion on the film. Guidelines for Socratic discussions can be found here: <http://www.authenticeducation.org/documents/WhatSeminar04.pdf>

Show the students their quotations from the Pre-Viewing Activity and see if their opinions were changed, altered or enhanced by the film.

Have students complete an exit note. The exit note should contain one idea that demonstrates what they learned from the film, as well as one question that they still have about the topic.

WEBSITES AND ONLINE RESOURCES

About the Film

<http://www.dronethedocumentary.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DRONEDOCUMENTARY>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/DroneDoc>

Additional Resources

BBC: The complexities and risks of US-led drone strikes came to light after an American hostage and an Italian hostage were accidentally killed in an American-led drone strike in Pakistan. These issues are examined in the story "How do drone strikes go wrong?"

<http://www.bbc.com/> Type the name of the article into the search function of the website.

Center for Civilians in Conflict: The Civilian Impact of Drones is a joint report between the Center for Civilians in Conflict and Columbia Law School. It provides a background to drone strikes, examines the civilian toll and considers the ethical and legal implications of drones.

<http://civiliansinconflict.org/> Click on Resources, then Pakistan Publications, then the 2012 report *The Civilian Impact of Drones*.

Foundation for Fundamental Rights: The FFR provides litigation, advocacy and investigations to individuals who have been denied their foundational human rights in Pakistan.

<http://rightsadvocacy.org>

Human Rights Watch: On July 1, 2016, President Barack Obama disclosed an assessment of the civilian toll of drone strikes. Critics, including Letta Taylor, in the article "Airstrike Transparency We Can't Believe In," have argued that the assessment is not entirely transparent or complete.

<https://www.hrw.org/> Type the name of the article into the search function of the website.

Popular Science: This film, "The History of the Drone in Nine Minutes," presents an animated history of the drone and its many iterations.

<http://www.popsci.com/> Type the title of the video into the search function of the website.

Reprive: This organization was founded by Clive Stafford Smith in 1999 and provides free legal and investigative support to victims of human rights abuses around the world.

<http://www.reprive.org.uk>

Reuters: In the article "Former US Drone Operators Say Strikes Feed Islamist Militancy," former drone operators discuss the side effects of lethal drone strikes, including survivors seeking revenge by turning to militancy, and operators dealing with ongoing PTSD.

<http://uk.reuters.com/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website.

TEDx Talks: In "Gaming for War," Tonje Hessen Schei discusses the gamification of war and how the US Army has been recruiting gamers over the past decade.

<https://youtube.com/> Type "Gaming for War Tonje Hessen Schei" into the search function of the website.

The Atlantic: This article, "The Story of America's Very First Drone Strike," examines the reasons why the US began to use drones for warfare, beginning with the botched attempt to kill Taliban Supreme Commander Mullah Mohammed Omar by a CIA Predator in October 2001.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website.

The Guardian: In "Life as a Drone Operator," Ed Pilkington interviews four former drone operators, who discuss their experiences at the Creech Air Force Base and their reactions to what they were tasked with.

<https://www.theguardian.com/> Type the title of the article into the search function of the website.

The New Yorker: This comprehensive long-read can be read in full, or sectioned off to examine the origins, history and victims of drone strikes in Pakistan.

<http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/11/24/unblinking-stare>

Wired: Noor Behram is a photographer in Waziristan who documents the aftermath of drone strikes to share with the outside world. This resource, called "Rare Photographs Show Ground Zero of the Drone War," includes some of Behram's photographs.

<https://www.wired.com/> Type the title of the resource into the search function of the website.

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

Questions for Pre-Viewing or Post-Viewing Activities

What are the different issues and themes that surface in this film?

What challenges do the film's subjects face on a daily basis?

Have you ever made a choice that has had a significant impact on where you are today?

What are the ways an individual can cause change to happen?

How does the film deal with issues of freedom, equality, human dignity, choice, and individual and collective rights and responsibilities?

What are the legal and ethical issues surrounding drone attacks, as presented in the film?

Who is (or should be) accountable in drone strikes?

Why would the US government claim that there have been very few civilian deaths in drone attacks?

What is a war crime? What were some of the major war crimes of the 20th century, and how do they compare to the drone attacks?

What are some of the short-term and long-term effects of drone warfare? What are the benefits and drawbacks?

What are the alternatives to drone strikes?

If you were in President Barack Obama's position, what would you do?

What does the film suggest about the future of drones and other types of warfare?

What is Canada's stance on drone strikes?

Is it important to you that your government is transparent about its choices and decisions?

In the film, P.W. Singer says, "There has always been a connection between the world of war and the world of entertainment, and I call this phenomenon 'militainment.'" Where does militainment exist in our lives, the media and pop culture? How does it affect our perceptions of war?

In the film, P.W. Singer discusses the overall challenge of technology as "the difference between the pace of technology and the pace of our human institutions. Technology is moving at this incredibly fast pace, and yet our human institutions, our laws, our sense of ethics, our government policies, they move at a linear pace.... The disconnect between them is growing by greater and greater amounts." Can his idea be applied to technologies other than drones? Can students find examples of these technologies in their own lives?

QUOTATIONS FROM THE FILM TO EXPLORE

1. *"We are at war with an organization that, right now, would kill as many Americans as they could if we did not stop them first."* President Barack Obama
2. *"I'm watching this person, and this person has no clue. We're the ultimate voyeurs, the ultimate peeping Toms. No one is going to catch us. And we're getting orders to take these people's lives. It was just point and click."* Brandon Bryant
3. *"Is there a war between the United States and Pakistan? No. Is the United States bombing in Pakistan, week in, week out? Yes, it is. Nowhere has been more observed and bombed by the CIA than Waziristan."* Chris Woods
4. *"If you are with a terrorist when a terrorist gets killed, the presumption is that you're a terrorist as well, even if we don't even know who you are."* (00:18:51)
5. *"Young men like to smash things. They don't like to assassinate. They like to smash things in groups of other young men. I think we'll have war for some time."* Andy von Flotow
6. *"I thought it was the coolest thing in the world. I would get to play a video game all day. And then the reality hits you that you may have to kill somebody."* Michael Haas
7. *"How do we get to the point where we are no longer warriors, we are murderers for the state?"* Col. Lawrence Wilkerson
8. *"We are trying to make the most powerful government in the world accountable for their actions."* Shahzad Akbar
9. *"People thought that it was like flipping a switch—you're in war, you're out of war. But every time I left, I was still fighting the war."* Brandon Bryant
10. *"If you're going to have a warrior, then give him what he needs. If you don't want to have a warrior, then get rid of the warrior."* Andy von Flotow
11. *"The whole western world has the presumption of innocence, and everyone is innocent until proven guilty, but in Waziristan, everyone is guilty until proven innocent."* Shahzad Akbar
12. *"The real question for us is not whether US-targeted killings are all legal. The real question is this: do we want to live in a world in which the US government's justification for killing is so infinitely malleable?"* Rosa Brooks
13. *"The United States, the world's most important superpower, traditional defender of human rights, is violating one of the most fundamental rights of all: the right to life. And it is doing so claiming dangerous legal authority that destabilizes the international legal framework. Those who are okay with the United States wielding this authority need to ask themselves what their response would be if Russia, China, Iran claimed the authority to target and kill enemies of the state without identifying who they are, what standards apply, what factual basis there is, what civilian casualties occur. This is a precedent that we are setting for others to follow."* Hina Shamsi
14. *"It feels like we're going through a bad science-fiction novel. If we dehumanize war, if we take the human aspect out of it, what's to stop us from sending a bunch of automaton robots into another country and let them wipe out the entire population?"* Brandon Bryant

CULMINATING ACTIVITY: DEBATE ON THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF DRONE STRIKES

I think drones have been effective in killing the top levels of Al Qaeda leaders. Now, that certainly doesn't mean there are not costs to all of that as well, and the great question that we have today is, are some of those costs outweighing some of the benefits?" John Bellinger III

Drone explores the problematic nature of using unmanned airplanes in airstrikes against alleged terrorists, including their effects on the operators and the survivors, as well as the potential implications in the future. Using the following resolution, investigate the varying positions on drones and conduct a class debate: Be it resolved that the benefits of drone strikes outweigh the costs.

The affirmative side will argue in the favour of the resolution, and the negative side will argue against the resolution. As a class, you may wish to modify one of the selected quotations or ideas from the film to create an alternative resolution.

As a final assessment for the debate, you will use your research and your notes from the debate and type a report of one to two double-spaced pages introducing the topic, addressing both sides of the debate and concluding with your opinion. Make sure to attach your research for your topic to your report.

ACTIVITY RUBRIC: DEBATE ON THE COSTS AND BENEFITS OF DRONE STRIKES

Knowledge/Understanding

Concepts	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Clear understanding of issues	Limited success in use of terms and concepts	Some success in use of terms and concepts	Moderate success in use of terms and concepts	Employs terms and concepts with a high degree of success	/5

Thinking/Inquiry

Research	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Collection of information	Information indicates limited research skills and does not include sufficient research on own topic	Information indicates moderately effective research skills on own topic	Information indicates effective research skills with most issues examined and considered	Information indicates excellent research skills all issues thoroughly examined and considered	/5

Application

Report	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Accounts in writing both sides of the debate as well as a well-supported opinion (grammar, 1-2 typed pages)	Communicates in writing with limited effectiveness	Communicates in writing with some effectiveness	Communicates in writing with considerable effectiveness	Communicates in writing with a high degree of effectiveness	/5

Communication

Debate	2.5 2.9	3.0 3.4	3.5 3.9	4.0 5.0	
Overall communication skills are clear and to the point; well-supported points; emphasis, clarity and confidence	Overall points are limited/vague; hard to understand with very little emphasis	Points are somewhat effective, with a few details; had some confidence in speech	Points and overall aim is clear; some points supported	Excellent suggestions and debating skills; research is used in speech	/5

Comments:

Total: _____/20

EXAMPLES OF CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

COURSE	OVERALL EXPECTATIONS
Grade 9-12 English	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate, gather and organize ideas and information to write for an intended purpose and audience. • demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts. • identify some media forms and explain how the conventions and techniques associated with them are used to create meaning.
Grade 10 Civics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze responses, at the local, national and international levels, to civic issues that involve multiple perspectives and differing civic purposes. • demonstrate an understanding of the beliefs and values underlying democratic citizenship and explain how they guide citizens' actions. • demonstrate an understanding of the various ways in which decisions are made and conflicts resolved in matters of civic importance, and the various ways in which individual citizens participate in these processes.
Grade 11 Media Studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of a variety of media texts. • deconstruct a variety of types of media texts, identifying the codes, conventions and techniques used and explaining how they create meaning.
Grade 11 Media Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze, through examination and reflection, their initial response to media art works, using various strategies and modes of communication. • identify and explain the messages in and meanings of media texts. • describe the characteristics of particular media genres and forms, and explain how they help to convey meaning and influence the audience.
Grade 11 Politics in Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues of political importance in various communities and ways to address them. • explain the political importance of some current issues and analyze various perspectives associated with these issues. • analyze some issues of political importance in terms of their causes, their impact and ways in which they have been addressed. • identify and analyze a political issue, with the goal of developing a personal plan of action to address this issue.
Grade 11 Equity, Diversity and Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore topics related to equity, diversity and/or social justice, and formulate questions to guide their research. • create research plans, and locate and select information relevant to their chosen topics, using appropriate social science research and inquiry methods. • assess, record, analyze and synthesize information gathered through research and inquiry. • demonstrate an understanding of a range of historical and contemporary Canadian equity and social justice issues. • demonstrate an understanding of how social activism can be used to support equity and social justice objectives.
Grade 11 Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use a psychological perspective to explain how diverse factors influence and shape human mental processes and behaviour. • use a sociological perspective to explain how diverse factors influence and shape individual and group social behaviour.
Grade 11 Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze how different political and economic systems and entities, including governments in Canada, make economic decisions.

Grade 12 Politics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the political inquiry process and the concepts of political thinking when investigating issues, events and developments of national and international political importance. • demonstrate an understanding of various political ideologies, theories and concepts, and analyze their relevance to Canadian and international politics. • analyze how social, economic and geographic factors influence contemporary politics in and relations between various countries around the world. • explain violations of human rights in Canada and abroad as well as the role of Canadian and international laws, institutions, and processes in the protection of human rights.
Grade 12 Equity and Social Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore topics related to equity, diversity and/or social justice, and formulate questions to guide their research. • assess, record, analyze and synthesize information gathered through research and inquiry. • communicate the results of their research and inquiry clearly and effectively, and reflect on and evaluate their research, inquiry, and communication skills. • demonstrate an understanding of a range of perspectives on and approaches to equity and social justice issues, and of factors that affect inequity and social injustice. • analyze, in historical and contemporary contexts, the dynamics of power relations and privilege as well as various factors that contribute to power or marginalization. • evaluate the contributions of individuals and groups and/or movements identified with specific aspects of the struggle for equity and social justice.
Grade 12 World Issues: A Geographic Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze relationships between demographic and political factors and quality of life in various countries and regions.
Grade 12 World History since the 15 th Century	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze the significance of various social, economic and political policies, developments, and ideas in various regions of the world since 1900. • analyze interactions between various groups since 1900 and how key individuals and social, economic and political forces have affected those interactions. • analyze the development of the rights, identity and heritage of different groups around the world since 1900.
Grade 12 Canadian and International Law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explain the principles underpinning human rights law and the legal significance of those laws, in Canada and internationally. • analyze issues associated with the development of human rights law in Canada and internationally. • compare the roles of the legislative and judicial branches of government in protecting human rights and freedoms, with a particular emphasis on Canada. • analyze various contemporary issues in relation to their impact or potential impact on human rights law.
Grade 12 Challenge and Change in Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of the causes and effects of social change. • demonstrate an understanding of how forces influence and shape social patterns and trends. • demonstrate an understanding of how various social structures and conditions support or limit global inequalities.
Grade 12 Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate an understanding of the main questions in ethics, and of the positions of major philosophers and schools of philosophy with respect to some of these questions. • demonstrate an understanding of connections between ethics and other areas of philosophy, other subject areas and various aspects of society, including everyday life.
Grade 12 Economics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analyze how economic and political ideas and various sociocultural factors affect economic decision making. • analyze economic trade-offs from the perspective of different stakeholders, including those in different countries, and how trade-offs influence economic decisions. • analyze the impact of some key international economic events and developments as well as various responses to them.

The Overall Expectations listed above are from the *Ontario Curriculum*. Complete course descriptions, including all Overall and Specific Expectations can be found at: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/curriculum.html>