

Grade 5-The Fighting Ground
Discussion Questions

1. As the story opens, what are Jonathan's thoughts and feelings about fighting in the war? What do you think his father's feelings about the war are? Use sections from the book to support your answers.
2. What was the reason that the bell at the tavern was ringing? What were Jonathan's reasons for going to war? Do you think he would have chosen to go with the corporal if he hadn't been told that he was needed? Explain.
3. Describe the attitudes of the American soldiers and other adults towards Jonathan. How is this different from the way you would expect them treat a young boy? Why are they acting like this?
4. Compare and contrast the Hessian soldiers with the American fighters.
5. What happens in the battle? How is it different from what Jonathan had expected? What emotions does he experience during this scene?
6. How much time passed from the beginning of the battle until the end? As you read it did it feel like it took that long? Explain.
7. How does Jonathan react to being captured by the Hessians? What do you think will happen to him now?
8. What thoughts does Jonathan have that show his confusion about the events of the past few hours? In what ways is this different he had expected?
9. How does the discovery of the boy and his parents affect Jonathan? Why does he act begin to act differently towards the Hessian soldiers?

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10. Jonathan had a perfect opportunity to kill one of the Hessians before he decided to escape but he didn't. Why didn't he? What do you think he should have done? Explain.
11. Who killed the boy's parents? Why? What was your response when you learned this?
12. What are the stories told about the Hessian soldiers? How are they actually like or unlike their reputations?
13. How has his experience with war changed Jonathan?
14. What are your feelings about the conclusion of the story?
15. What messages is the author trying to convey through this story? Which of these ideas have the greatest impact on the readers? Why?
16. What have you learned about war from this book? Was anything different than you had thought it might be? Explain.