Ender's Game

by

Orson Scott Card

1985

MonkeyNotes Study Guide by Kelly McCauley

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KEY LITERARY ELEMENTS

SETTING
The novel starts off on Earth, with scenes at the school and the Wiggin home. Little attention is given to the details of this setting, not even the name of the city, and so it comes across as a standard American neighborhood. The shuttle ride introduces Ender to space environments. This involves a degree of disorientation, and it is on the shuttle that Ender learns how to change his perspective as to which direction is up in his setting.

Battle School is composed of army barracks with rows of bunk beds; dining halls one for soldiers and one for commanders, with scoreboards decorating both; the game room, with various video games for the children to play; battlerooms, where the children have practice and battles in zero gravity; and a gym with shower rooms, where Ender and Bonzo fight. There is also an area for teachers’ quarters, which the children never go to, but it is presumably in this vicinity where the conversations between Graff and other adults takes place. Although the Battle School is a very controlled setting, Ender comes to realize that the adults will use this control to put him through trials, not to prevent violence and conflict.

Back on Earth, the Wiggin family has moved out to the country in North Carolina. It is in these woods where Valentine comes across a squirrel that Peter tortured to death, and where the two have their discussion, leading to the creation of the Locke and Demosthenes identities. Hence, what goes on in the woods is seen as removed from what is normally expected in a society. There is also a scene when Graff comes to Valentine’s school, with the school serving as a place which reestablishes authority over the children, as seen in Valentine’s consent to write the letter to Ender even though she regrets it.

When Ender returns to Earth on leave before going to Command School, he too goes to North Carolina. There, secluded in the wilderness, is a large house, overlooking lakes on either side. Although there are wasps that Ender says will sting without provocation, the setting is peaceful, allowing Ender the mental recovery and relaxation he needs. Though at first, the sunlight, different gravity, and ground (which did not curve upwards like at Battle School) feel unfamiliar to him, it is here that Ender learns to love Earth.

The shuttle ride to Eros, where Command School is located, is long and Ender and Graff begin to feel enclosed and tired of the space. Eros, built by the buggers, is not much better; the low ceilings, narrow passages, downward-sloping floor, and lower gravity make Ender uncomfortable. The focus of activity here is in the simulation rooms, where, it turns out, Ender is actually commanding the real fleets.

When he leaves Eros, it is not for Earth, but for the first human colony, on a former bugger world, which will become known as Ender’s World. While looking for a location for another group of colonists, Ender discovers a landscape mimicking that in the fantasy game he played at Battle School. The setting here is used by the buggers to communicate with Ender and lead him to the discovery of their hive queen.

LIST OF CHARACTERS
Major Characters

Ender - Ender is a small boy, only six years old when the novel begins, and not much older than ten years old when he defeats the buggers. He is a Third, but permitted by the government to be born because he has the superior intelligence of the Wiggin children and a disposition that is kinder than Peter’s, but not as sensitive as Valentine. As such, Ender is able to do well in Battle School and go on to successfully command the human mission to the bugger home world in Command School, but he regrets the deaths he has caused, and is glad for the chance the hive queen presents of trying to redeem himself.

Valentine - The sister of Ender, she consistently comes to his defense, whether it be when Peter threatens him, or when she feels that Graff is suggesting that Ender is mentally similar to Peter. Although she agrees to go
along with Peter’s plan for keeping the world united by taking on the identity of Demosthenes in her writings on the nets, she believes that her ability to persuade by flattery along with her other strengths (such as equal mental abilities) will, in the end, make her stronger than Peter. She is able to use that power to keep Ender from going back to Earth, where she is sure that he would fall under Peter’s control, and instead takes him to the colony, where she writes a history of the war.

**Peter** - The oldest of the Wiggin children, Peter uses threats and violence in order to control those around him. Despite having tortured a squirrel in the woods, he admits that he fears becoming evil, and takes on the identity of Locke in order to influence events. When the bugger war ends, he ends the fighting on Earth through the Locke Proposal, and becomes Hegemon, basically ruling the world.

**Graff** - Although the character appears only at the beginning of the chapters and then sporadically through the events, he is the main adult character in the novel. It is Graff who decides what will be done to Ender in order to shape him into a commander, and although he knows that this will put Ender through a lot of difficult situations, he says that, in the end, he will be Ender’s friend.

**Minor Characters**

**Buggers** - Little is known about them throughout the novel, even though they are presented as the threat to humankind. Because they are unable to communicate with humans, they are unable to explain the misunderstanding that resulted in them fighting against the humans in the previous two wars, and to avert the third one. Their home world is destroyed when Ender uses the device on it, but they create a landscape mimicking the one in the fantasy game in order to lead Ender to the hive queen, who explains the situation, leading to Ender’s promise to find a new world for the buggers.

**Mazer Rackham** - Rackham had been the commander who had won the previous bugger war, by taking out the ship with the queen on it. The old man becomes Ender’s teacher when he comes to Command School, and Ender believes it is him he is fighting on the simulator; Mazer is also the one who tells Ender after the war that this is not the case, that Ender has been fighting the buggers all along. He pilots the ship to the first colony on a bugger homeworld.

**Stilson** - Stilson is the bully at Ender’s school at the start of the novel. He picks on Ender along with a group of other boys and when Ender talks him into fighting one-on-one, Ender kills him. Although the character is thus physically absent from the rest of the novel, Ender thinks about him throughout, as the first time he killed.

**Battle School children (Alai, Bonzo, Petra, Dink, Bean, etc.)** - The children at the Battle School are unlike typical children, in that they all feel the pressure of commanding in order to one day defeat the buggers. Alai is Ender’s first and strongest friendship, Petra helps train him when he is not able to practice with the army, and Dink allows him to develop his skills at the game as well as warning him when he is in danger from Bonzo and his gang; Bean is similar to Ender, in that he is young and quite talented at the game. Most of his friends from Battle School end up fighting alongside Ender at Command School against the buggers, but the relationship of a commander to his subordinates remains strong.

**CONFLICT**

**Protagonist** - “Ender” Wiggin is the protagonist, the main character, about whom the action revolves. The majority of the story is told as events occur to him, and all other characters have ties to him. While he must deal with his brother Peter, and concentrated fights with a few of the other boys (Stilson, Bernard, and Bonzo).

**Antagonist** - the buggers are seen as the overall antagonist- the character who stands in opposition to the protagonist. Although it is unclear why, they have fought humans in two other wars, and now humans are preparing for a third war in which they hope to defeat the buggers in order for the humans themselves to
survive. However, Ender comes to see the adults as the real enemy. Graff makes sure that Ender learns that he can never count on an adult to come to his aid. Ender eventually comes to the conclusion, with the influence of Dink, that the adults are manipulating him, forcing him to become a killer.

**Climax** - The climax, the peak of action in a story which events have been building up to, comes when Ender uses Dr. Device on the bugger home planet. Although he expects to be reprimanded for the action, instead the adults celebrate. Then he is told that the battles have been real since he came to Command School. Thus, the buggers as an antagonist have been defeated, but the adults won, having deceived Ender into once again killing.

**Outcome** - The following chapters summarize what occurred afterwards, the outcome. Peter comes into power on Earth, where Ender is never allowed to return. Instead, Valentine and Ender go to the first colony on a previous bugger world, where Ender finds the hive queen and, learning that the buggers wish to live in peace, promises to find her a place to live again. Ender and Valentine then set out in search of a place.

**SHORT PLOT / CHAPTER SUMMARY (Synopsis)**
*Ender’s Game* starts out with two unnamed people talking, the one convincing the other that a boy is the one they are looking for; even if now he is malleable, they can change that by surrounding him with enemies. Then the novel switches to the story of Ender, a small six-year-old boy, who gets his monitor removed, a sign that he is no longer a candidate for a government program. This leaves him vulnerable to the school bully, Stilson, who, with his gang, surround Ender after school and begin picking on him, calling him a Third (a term for the third child born in a family, with government permission because of population restrictions). Ender realizes he must fight back, and so, when the other boys let go of him for a one-on-one fight with Stilson, Ender kicks Stilson just above the chest, taking him down. But Ender wants to end the fighting for good, so he keeps kicking Stilson, until (although Ender does not know it at the time) Stilson is dead. He warns the others, walks away, and cries because he thinks he is just like his older brother, Peter.

Back at home, Peter beats Ender up, but Valentine intervenes before it can get too bad, saying that she has evidence against him. Peter says one day he will kill Ender and although he tries to play it off, Ender and Valentine believe him. However, later that night, when Peter thinks Ender is asleep, he tells him that he is sorry about the monitor being removed, he understands, and that he loves him.

However, the next day, the arrival of a man from the International Fleet (I.F.) arrives at the house to get Ender to come to Battle School, a training school for children to fight in the war against the buggers (an alien race that has attacked humans unsuccessfully twice before). The man, Colonel Graff, says that it is Ender’s choice, that Battle School will not be easy, and that he will be away from Valentine for a long time. Ender does not want to go but eventually says he will. Ender says goodbye to his family and leaves with Colonel Graff, with Valentine crying out to him as he does.

On the launch on the way from Earth to Battle School, Ender learns how he can reorient directions in zero gravity. Because of this, Graff singles him out as the only competent one, and the other children turn against him. When one of the boys starts hitting Ender in the head, Ender grabs his arm and, because of the lack of gravity, propels him into a wall, breaking the boy’s arm. At the end of the launch, Ender is hurt because of Graff’s intentional move to make the other boys dislike Ender, but Graff tells him that he is interested in producing the best soldiers in the world, and Ender will just have to become great now. When Ender is gone though, Graff admits that he is Ender’s friend and he feels bad for what he is about to put the boy through.

At the Battle School, Ender and the other boys pick bunks and get settled in. Dap, their mother figure at the school, comes in and tells them that there is no deliberate injury allowed at Battle School, or else that person gets iced out- kicked out. Ender is isolated through dinner in the mess hall, where giant scoreboards show team standings. One of the older boys warns Ender not to end up like him, and Ender is certain that he will not,
although he is missing his family and wishing he could go home. Things turn around for Ender when he is able to beat one if the older kids at a video game with techniques that had not been used before. Also, Ender is able to make friends by sending a message (something none of the other boys have figured out how to do) making fun of Bernard, the kid whose arm Ender broke and who has since formed a group like Stilson had. Bernard is furious about the message, but Dap will not do anything about it. Shen, the boy who Ender had defended by sending the message, and some other Launchies join Ender for breakfast.

The first time they enter the battleroom, where the armies fit in battles in zero gravity, the Launchies have some difficulty learning how to move about. Ender and Alai are the first to figure out how to use their guns to freeze people, and, with Bernard and Shen, they freeze everyone else. Alai thus becomes Ender’s best friend and the leader of the Launchies in Bernard’s place. Ender is meanwhile obsessed with a fantasy game, in which he has become stuck at a point when a Giant gives him a choice between two drinks and no matter which he chooses, he dies. Ender, becoming frustrated, attacks the Giant by digging out his eyes. Although with the Giant is thus dead, Ender gets to Fairyland, he is so distraught over killing in what was supposed to just be a game, that he does not bother exploring.

Ender is suddenly transferred to the Salamander Army, which upsets him because he was happy with the Launchies. Alai tells him they will always be friends regardless of the transfer, and he kisses Ender on the cheek, with the word “Salaam”. Ender does not understand, but knows it is a sacred moment. He leaves, and plays the fantasy game, in which he is able to make it to a tower room at “The End of the World”. Before he can play much farther, he is called to Salamander Army barracks. Ender is small in comparison to the others and becomes friends with Petra, the other outcast in the group because she is a girl. She offers to give Ender practice in the mornings, because it is clear that his commander, Bonzo Madrid, does not want him and will not let him practice with the army. Ender also begins practicing with the Launchies again in order to get better, despite Bonzo’s disapproval. During battles though, Ender follows Bonzo’s orders and does nothing, until he is able to turn a battle from a defeat to a draw. He is then traded to Rat Army, but not before Bonzo beats him up as a reprimand for disobeying him, which leads Ender to take a personal combat course.

It turns out that Dink Meeker, one of the toon commanders in Rat Army had requested Ender. He trains Ender and makes him a part of the toon. After practice one day though, Ender stays back and watches Dink, who floats about in zero gravity for awhile. He tells Ender that it is prevent himself from going crazy, which Battle School can do to children; they are not like the children back home. Dink does not even think the bugger war is real, but rather a ploy to keep things on Earth united. While Ender does not believe him, it does make him question things more. His additional practices with the Launchies continue but some of the older boys begin picking on them. When it turns into a fight in zero gravity, the other Launchies are able to escape and Ender fights his way out. The teachers do nothing in response but the other commanders send some of their soldiers to protect them during practice and encourage Ender to continue. Aside from that fight, Ender also becomes disturbed at the fantasy game, which shows him a picture of Peter when he looks in the mirror.

Back on Earth, the actual Peter seems to be doing better, enjoying school and getting along with others, since the family moved. Valentine knows better, having seen squirrel body in the woods that Peter had pinned and watched while it died. He has also been using his spare time to monitor Russian troop movements and is convinced that the Earth will go to war once the bugger threat is gone. He wants Valentine to help him come up with identities on the nets so that they can write to influence the public mind and be taken seriously, since then no one would know they are children. In this way, he can prevent the war from escalating. He even admits to his own fear of becoming as cruel and evil as Valentine thinks he is, and, while she is not sure if he means it or not, she is sure that she is more powerful than him, so she agrees. They take on the identities of Locke and Demosthenes, and each writes the column that is in opposition to their actual views. The columns gradually gain in popularity.

Ender is unhappy at Battle School, because he has respect but not friendship, and feels despair when he cannot
beat the fantasy game. Colonel Graff therefore talks to Valentine, asking for her help in making Ender happy again. He wants her to write a letter, and this one will be given to Ender, unlike all the previous ones she had written. Although she is hesitant, she does so. When Ender gets it, he cries because it means that even his memory of Valentine has been destroyed. He returns to the fantasy game, in which the snake turns into Valentine, and he walks out of the tower room with her. Graff is pleased with Ender’s mental recovery but Valentine is upset over selling out her brother.

Ender is put in charge of his own army, a new one called Dragon Army, with mostly untrained soldiers. Ender is determined to make them good, but in doing so, soon finds himself treating his best soldier, Bean, the same way Graff had treated him. Along with other new rules, Ender is also no longer able to practice with his old Launchee friends and now things between himself and Alai are more distant as they have become competitors.

Dragon Army is put into an early and rigorous series of battles, all of which they win, which does not help maintain Ender’s previous friendships. He begins watching old videos of the bugger wars in order to learn from their techniques. He also asks Bean to create a small group and have them try out everything Bean can think of, even if it seems stupid. One of the things they discover is that by using a thin wire, they are able to change directions quickly in midair, a technique that they are able to use in battle.

Returning from practice, Ender notices a number of boys in the halls acting suspicious. Petra and Dink both warn him that he is in danger; Bonzo has a grudge against him and intends to hurt him. Ender does not think too much about it, trusting the teachers to keep him safe. Meanwhile, Dragon Army keeps winning battles, having become a united and skilled army. Tired after yet another battle, Ender goes to the gym and starts to shower, not realizing that he is alone. Bonzo and a group of other boys corner him in the shower, but, once again, Ender is able to talk Bonzo into a one-on-one fight. Dink arrives and tries to prevent the fight but the other boys hold him back.

Ender and Bonzo fight, until Ender is able to bring his head up into Bonzo’s face and then kick him in the crotch. Bonzo falls (dead), and while the medical staff and his friends rush in, Dink leads Ender away. Ender now realizes that no one will ever come to his aid, and then he cries because he did not want to hurt Bonzo. He is so upset over the fight that when his army is given instructions later that day to fight against two armies at once, he sends his soldiers over to the gate to perform the victory ceremony without bothering to fight. He thus wins, but no longer cares about the game. As he lays in his room, Bean comes to tell him that the leaders of the Dragon Army have all been given positions in other armies. Ender soon receives news of his own advancement; he has graduated and will be sent to Command School.

Before going to Command School, Graff and Ender spend some time at a lakefront house in North Carolina where Ender can relax. Graff brings Valentine out to see him in hopes that she can help with Ender’s mental recovery. Ender tells her that he is tired of the manipulation and does not want to kill anymore because in the moment he defeats an enemy, he loves them. Valentine, however, tells him that she is concerned about herself, and she wants Ender to protect her from the buggers as she used to protect him from Peter. Ender decides to return, having now also learned to love Earth. On the trip out to Command School, he talks with Graff about the buggers, of which little is known, but both agree that they want to be the ones to survive.

Command School is on a former bugger world, Eros, and its design makes Ender uncomfortable. He is given a teacher- Mazer Rackham, the commander who had been victorious against the buggers in a previous war. He shows Ender more of the bugger way of fighting, as well as about Dr. Device, a weapon that destabilizes things to the size of dirt particles. Instead of the Battle Room, Ender runs through scenarios on a simulator. As he becomes more skilled, squadron leaders (which turn out to be his friends from Battle School) are added, whom he can communicate with. Although he is not allowed to ever see them, he learns their strengths and weaknesses, and how to command them. The pressure builds, with increasingly more difficult battles, causing Ender to have restless nights, pass out during practice, and eat little.
Finally he is told it is his last day, with the battle being his final examination. The screen shows a bugger force that completely outnumbers his human fleet. Ender then stops caring about the rules and sees a way out, to prevent himself from becoming a commander. He maneuvers so that he can use the device on the planet, completely destroying it and wiping out the bugger fleet. Although he expects to be reprimanded for this action, the adults around him are instead cheering. Mazer Rackham explains to him that since he got to Command School, the battles had been real, and now the buggers are gone. Ender leaves the room and sleeps, furious at having been tricked into being a killer.

He sleeps through the fighting on Earth, which is ended by a Locke Proposal, put forth by Peter. When he does awake, he sees his friends, but one by one they return to Earth, and he does not. Graff becomes the new Minister of Colonization, ending the population limitation laws and sending out people to colonize former bugger colonies. This brings Valentine to Eros, where she tells Ender that she has made sure he can never return to Earth so that Peter will not be able to use him. Instead, she talks him into coming with her to the first new colony, with Ender serving as governor.

On that colony, Ender discovers a landscape built by the buggers to imitate the fantasy game. It is their way of communicating with him, in order to lead him to their still-surviving hive queen, who explains how the buggers regret the misunderstanding with the humans. Ender promises to find them a world where they can once again live. He also starts a kind of religion, as a Speaker for the Dead, telling the true story of the buggers, Peter, and others when they die.

**THEMES**

**Major Themes**

**Children (capable) versus Adults (untrustworthy)** - The dichotomy that is most strictly adhered to in the novel is that of children and adults. The interaction between the two groups is minimal, and even in the structure of the novel this is emphasized, by having the adults speak at the beginning of the chapter, and then the children’s perspective takes over. Instead of portraying the children as innocent though as is standard practice, they are capable, with the burden of saving the world on them, even while they are trapped in the adults’ world. The adults are untrustworthy and manipulative, seen most clearly when they trick Ender into destroying the bugger home world.

**The line between Good and Evil** - This theme is epitomized in Ender and Peter, and the meaning changes as the novel progresses. In the beginning, Peter is seen as evil and Ender is good; in their fight at home, Peter easily overpowers Ender, while Ender remains virtually helpless. Then the situation becomes more complicated, as Ender begins to inflict pain/death on others while fearing he is turning into Peter, and Peter says he wants to save the world and is afraid of becoming as bad as Valentine thinks he is. In the end, Peter does get power, but he seems to rule well, and Ender destroys the buggers, but makes a promise to find them a new world.

**Games versus Reality** - For the children at the Battle School, the game is reality. Dink seems to be the only one who does not care, and then, after the fight with Bonzo, Ender does as well. At Command School, what initially starts as a game, again turns out to be reality, when Ender thinks he is going through a simulation but is in fact fighting the actual war with the buggers. The fantasy game that Ender plays draws on real feelings of the player, finding a picture of Peter, and thus begins to demonstrate Ender’s mental anxieties. The buggers create the scenes from the game on their world; in this way as well, the game has entered reality.

**Minor Themes**

**Murder and Redemption / Love and Destruction / Love and Hate** - Ender says that in the moment he destroys an enemy, he loves him because of the deep level of understanding he shares of the enemy. His love for Valentine drives him to go to Battle School and then to continue his training at Command School, resulting
in harm for some of the children and all the buggers. Ender regrets this murder though, so that when he is given the opportunity to redeem himself by finding a place for the hive queen to begin their race again, he agrees.

**Revenge/ Deceit / Manipulation** - This theme mostly follows along the lines of children versus adults. Manipulation and deceit is the main way the adults interact with the children, by controlling their lives at Battle School and then using the supposed simulation in order to have them fight, the only method that they say would have worked. Graff even uses Valentine in order to get to Ender. The revenge of humans for the previous two buggier wars is the reason behind their actions throughout the whole novel. Under the manipulation of the adults which has driven the children to put so much emphasis on the game, Bonzo turns to revenge against Ender, a move that ultimately ends in Bonzo’s death.

**Winning at all costs** - From the first chapter, Ender realizes that it is necessary to win so that the enemy will never fight him again. This has important consequences, as it drives him to murder Stilson and Bonzo, and to destroy the buggier world even though he has been warned that the device has never been used in such a way, all of which have an impact on his future actions and psychological makeup.

**Being different** - Ender is different from the start because he is a Third. The Wiggin children in general are different because of their high mental abilities. The children at the Battle School are different from those back on Earth, as Dink points out, since they have the pressure of being in command instead of just living. Petra even jokes about how very different they have become when she says that, when the war is over, they will probably all have to go to school.

**Taking on an identity** - Valentine is the main character who struggles with this theme, when she and Peter decide to take on the pseudonyms of Demosthenes and Locke, respectively, on the nets. She finds herself adopting some of Demosthenes attitudes and opinions, even though previously she found them to be wrong and horrible. Ender is also concerned about this to a degree, in that he has been placed in the position of a commander and it has been left to him to take care of things. At various times, he worries that he will turn into Peter, Graff (after the way he treats Bean), and a murderer.

**The struggle for Survival / Understanding** - Ender fights when he has no other options, as when the group of boys get him cornered in the shower until he fights Bonzo. He knows it comes down to only one of them will survive. On a larger scale, the buggers are struggling to understand the humans. Once they do, they stop fighting, but, as it is too late, they build a landscape from the fantasy game to attempt to communicate. They need Ender to help them survive, by taking care of the hive queen.

**The Influence of Memories on what a person is** - Ender treasures the memories of Valentine and Alai strongest, memories which are also used to affect his mental state. Also, the memory of Peter keeps him from wanting to use his power to inflict pain, serving as a constant reminder that he should only go so far, as when the fantasy game puts in the picture of Peter. The buggers, for their part, use the memories of their race to communicate to Ender what happened to them.

**MOOD**

The mood in the novel is one of seriousness. Even though the main characters are children, their lives are not like those typically portrayed. Peter is capable of evil acts, like torturing the squirrel, and gaining power, despite his youth. Up at the Battle School, there are few light-hearted moments, and the friendships that Ender does develop are all of a grave nature; at one point, Alai and Shen are jokingly reminiscing about the fight in the Battle Room, but Ender realizes that even then he is always to be treated as a commander. When there are fights, children get hurt and killed. Ender is even tricked into destroying the buggers’ world, and the action weighs heavily on him. He goes through periods of intense emotional turmoil, as seen when he bit his own fist to the point of drawing blood in his sleep.
Even when things seem to be going well for Ender, he realizes what he feels is “despair”. The word choice here is emphasized, adding even more intensity behind it. Furthermore, a good portion of the novel is set in the Battle School, which, as a space environment, is relatively sterile, not much of a home environment where characters can be comfortable and relaxed. The overall effect of the mood, developed by the characters, plot, word choice, and setting, helps to further the seriousness of the themes of good versus evil, destruction, and manipulation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION - BIOGRAPHY
Orson Scott Card (1951-) is best known for *Ender’s Game* and the other novels in the series, especially *Speaker for the Dead*, which have been recognized and awarded among science fiction circles. Card has also written in a variety of other genres, including plays, short stories, books on writing, the *Homecoming* series, other science fiction books, and nonfiction, such as articles on computer technology.

*Ender’s Game* first appeared in abbreviated form in a magazine in 1977. Card later expanded it into a full-length novel, published in 1985, to better establish Ender as a character for *Speaker for the Dead*. There is a film based on the novel currently in the works.

Card himself was born and raised out in the western United States as a Mormon. As a youth, he read a good deal of fiction and history, and was exposed as a teenager to the *Foundation* series by Isaac Asimov, which stuck with him. He had five children and now lives in Greensboro, North Carolina (featured in *Ender’s Game*).

LITERARY / HISTORICAL INFORMATION
The main literary influence on Card was the *Foundation* novels by Isaac Asimov. The books are based on the idea that there are predictable cycles to history, and a psychohistorian uses these to predict the future in order to shorten a dark period; on a much smaller scale, Peter does this, when he influences events to prevent large-scale war from breaking out. Also in common with *Ender’s Game* is the need to save mankind, and the spread of man through the universe. Fighting is seen as a last option, and trickery and deceit are often used.

The main historical influence would seem to be the Cold War. This manifests itself in the world polarization into two political spheres, Peter’s monitoring of Russian troop movements and fear of war, and weapons that can destroy whole worlds. It is even possible that the Russian image of training kids demandingly for the future formed part of the basis of Card’s conception of Battle School. Throughout the book, Card also makes numerous historical allusions, to figures such as Locke, Demosthenes, Caesar, and Alexander. This serves to ground the novel more, to make it seem more as a possible future for Earth, by giving the reader identifiable points from which to project from.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES WITH NOTES / ANALYSIS
CHAPTER ONE: Third
Summary
The book starts off with two unnamed people discussing the test results of three siblings. Though one brother and a sister have already proved inadequate for the mysterious people’s purposes, the younger brother is still a question. While one of the people feels that the boy can be too easily subdued to others’ wills, the first speaker feels that he is the one they need and that this weakness of malleability can be overcome by keeping him in the presence of enemies always. This seems cruel, but the two people decide it is acceptable, since it not only pales in comparison to what the buggers would do, but it also is saving the world. The buggers, and what it all has to do with saving the world, are explained later.

After this brief conversation, the chapter shifts focus to six-year-old Andrew Wiggin, also known as Ender. He is getting the monitor, which has been on him for three years, removed. Although Ender hopes that this will allow him to be brothers with Peter, who treats him poorly and calls him “Third”, he realizes that this cruelty in
Peter makes such a change unlikely. The removal of the monitor hurts (as he expected it would, since the adult said it would not), and, as his body spasms, the nurse and doctor have to struggle to hold him and give him medicine. The doctor is shook up and agitated after this, saying that by leaving the monitor in for so long, its removal could have killed Ender.

However, Ender recovers and returns to class, dazed and with the sense that something is missing, a sensation which the doctor warns him will occur; it is the monitor Ender is missing. Since Valentine, his older sister, had taught him math when he was three, Ender is free to ignore the lesson, playing on his desk instead, which he knows he can get away with. A message- the word “Third”- is sent to him, meant as an insult. It refers to the number of children in his family; more than two is considered socially unacceptable. He was only allowed by the government to be born and schooled as an experiment, of which the monitor was a part of. Its removal is supposed to signal that Ender, along with all the other children who no longer have them, is not the child the government is looking for, and Ender imagines they would just as soon they had never let him be born at all.

When Ender sees the word though, he smiles. He was the one who had realized how to use the desks to send the messages and have them march around, so while it was an insult, the imitation of his methods is also a compliment. Once school lets out though, the abuse becomes more physical. Stilson, a bigger boy, wait for him and start pushing him around. Ender does nothing at first but then realizes he has few options; with the monitor gone, help was not likely to come.

Ender asks if it takes so many to fight him and when the other boys let go of him, he quickly kicks Stilson just above the chest and he drops. The other boys stand in shock, wondering if Stilson is dead. Ender, though he realizes it is against the rules of fighting, also knows that he must win the fight for good then or they will come after him again. So Ender just keeps on kicking the bleeding and helpless Stilson. He gives a warning to others and walks away.

Ender turns a corner, puts his head against a wall, and cries. In beating up Stilson, he has showed a side of himself that is just like Peter.

Notes
It is not until the sequel to Ender’s Game, Speaker for the Dead, that Ender’s name is explained. When his sister Valentine was young, she was unable to correctly pronounce Andrew, saying it like Ender. The meaning of the nickname can be seen better later in the book, but the general drift is that Ender puts an end to things. He did not, for example, let the fight with Stilson and the other boys be resumed later; he took it to the most extreme that he could to be sure that it was over for good.

This chapter introduces the reader to a technique that will be used throughout the book. Card begins chapters with these two seemingly omniscient beings conversing, then returns to the narrative from Ender’s point of view. This creates a contrast between Ender as a child with limited control and knowledge over his surroundings, and the two people who are manipulating and observing events. For example, the first discussion ends with talk of saving the world; the next scene has Ender overwhelmed with pain.

Two major themes are also presented, one is that of being different. Not only is Ender separated from the other kids by being a Third, but also by having the monitor for so long. Both characteristics have singled him out at school and at home. When Ender first returns to the classroom, he thinks Stilson’s name is Peter and the two are alike in that they both pick on him. However, Ender reacts to them differently; whereas Stilson drives him to animal-like behavior, the thought of Peter has a kind of controlling influence, since Ender fears so much that he will become him.

This leads to the second theme. Unlike in most literature, youth is not presented as innocence. Ender fought
beyond the boundaries of what could be accepted in a civilized world, and knew it. As will continue to be proved by later events, childhood is not protected from the cruelties and brutalities of life.

**CHAPTER TWO: Peter**

**Summary**

This time, the mysterious figure- a soldier, as is his companion- is not as sure of Ender as he had been in the previous conversation. It is hard for him to read the boy’s emotions now, without the help of the monitor. Their discussion mentions the fight with Stilson though, so it is clear that Ender is still under some form of surveillance, which will be used to see how Ender will deal with his brother Peter. Both of the people acknowledge that they are messing him up.

When Ender returns home, Valentine sympathizes with him over the removal of his monitor, though he says he is glad, and tries to make it seem that Ender is now one of them. Peter, however, does not see it that way, since Ender had his in for so long, and now Peter has a gleam of anger in his eyes. He wants to play buggers and astronauts, a game that inevitably becomes violent for the buggers. Ender, as always, must play the part of the bugger.

With his mask on to look like a bugger, Ender’s vision is severely restricted and he cannot dodge Peter’s blow. But Peter will not let him take off the mask. Instead he puts his knee into Ender’s chest while he is on the ground, pressing the air out of Ender. Peter says that he could kill Ender this way, that the whole thing would look like an accident, and he means it. Valentine intervenes, pointing out that he could not kill her as well, claiming it was an accident, and she would tell. Plus she also has a letter in a vault that will be opened if she is to die under suspicious circumstances, blaming Peter for her death. Such a letter would prevent Peter from getting elected into the government as he wants.

Peter responds that she had better be around Ender all the time. Valentine reminds Peter that he is not any smarter than her and Ender, but he just repeats his threat, that he will strike sometime in the future. Then he laughs, saying that Valentine and Ender are gullible. However, Ender really does believe that he meant what he said, and thinks Peter deserves the beating he gave Stilson. He even shows him the blood on his toe but Peter does not believe him.

When Mother and Father return home, they try to console Ender about his monitor being removed. However, Father’s talk about how nice it was that they now had three children, only makes Ender feel even more aware of the fact that he is a Third.

That night, Peter gets up to go to the bathroom, and on his way back, stops at Ender’s bed. Ender thinks he is going to kill him. Instead Peter, thinking Ender is asleep, says that he is sorry, understands what he is going through, and loves Ender as a brother. Ender waits for Peter to go to sleep and then takes off the bandaid covering where his monitor was and cries.

**Notes**

The reason for Peter’s hostility towards Ender is made clear here. He sees Ender as a constant reminder of his own failure. Peter had been promising enough to have the government allow Ender to be born, hoping that he would be even better. Peter of course does not like this judgment, or the embarrassment that comes with having a Third in the family.

The bugger and astronaut game is a preview of the larger plot. Literally, it is an imitation of a real war that serves the basis for events in the book. Also, the war is presented in the format of a game, as it will be presented to Ender until the very end of the book.
CHAPTER THREE: Graff

Summary
Now more convinced that Ender is the one they have been looking for, the conversation of the two people is focused on how to get him away from his sister, as their mutual love and affection creates a weak point in him. They determine to bring about their separation by taking Ender away, either through lies or, if it comes to it, by telling him the truth.

The scene around the Wiggin breakfast table is a fairly average one- Ender is not eating, worried about going to school, and Mother is concerned about him while Father reads the paper. Peter comes down to join them. Shortly afterwards, an officer of the International Fleet (IF) comes, and Mother and Father leave the room to find out what he wants. Peter tells Ender that he’s in trouble over the fight at school, though Ender does not believe him. Valentine then walks into the kitchen, pretending to be sick to get out of an oral exam, a ploy Peter sees right through.

Father calls Ender into the parlor, where his parents are upset after hearing about his fight with Stilson. The IF officer, however, is more interested in Ender’s reasoning behind continuing to beat the boy, than in reprimanding him for doing so. Ender says he wanted to win all the fights, fight in the first one such that there would not be others, and though he begins to cry, this is the motive that the officer wanted to hear. He reveals that his name is Colonel Hyrum Graff and that he is there to ask Ender to enter the Battle School. Ender is the one the government wanted after all; taking away his monitor had just been the final test, not a result of his rejection.

Father and Mother have already given their consent, which they had to do before Ender was allowed to be conceived, but they are nonetheless upset at the thought of Ender being taken away from them. Graff makes it clear though that it is Ender’s choice, since Battle School is training to become an officer, a position which requires one to be a volunteer in order to have the right attitude to serve well. Ender wants to go and recognizes that there would be some advantages, namely avoiding school and Peter, but those reasons are not as big as the disadvantage of leaving Valentine and becoming a soldier (he does not like the kind of people who use power-physical or mental- over others).

Graff wants, and gets, a private conversation with Ender, in which he tells the boy that it will not be easy. He will not be able to return on leave until he is 12 years old, and his training will last until he is 16. This means that Valentine will grow up in his absence and he will not know her. Graff knows he will not miss his parents as much, nor will his parents miss him for long.

Graff explains that they are both religious; Father is Catholic and Mother is Mormon. They have renounced their respective religions in order to be acceptable to society, but they have not stopped believing, as seen in their children’s names and Father’s secret Baptisms of them. Ender is therefore a source of pride (they were able to have a third child), cowardice (they did not do more against compliance), and shame (having a Third prevents them from being wholly a part of society, despite having already given up so much). While his parents love him, his presence is a reminder of their forbidden past. Valentine, on the other hand, loves him completely and so it is more difficult to leave her.

Ender asks about life at the Battle School and Graff describes it as tough classes, with an emphasis on math and computers, and a military focus. The Battle Room overshadows it all though, with its war games where children are organized into armies which train and fight against each other in zero gravity. The school is mostly boys, with some girls but none like Valentine since she is too mild.

While Ender might be happier staying where he is and that he might not work out after all, Graff feels he must ask anyhow because, while they have made all the military preparations it could in the 80 years since the last war, the only thing that saved mankind from the buggers last time was finding Mazer Rackham as a
commander. Now they must find someone to lead the next war, and Ender could be it. Ender agrees to go though he is afraid, but Graff makes him rephrase himself until he says simply that he does not want to go, but he will.

He does not need to pack anything, since it will all be provided at the school. He says goodbye to his family and walks out. Valentine cries out that for him to return and that she will love him forever as he gets in the car.

**Notes**
There are few parallels between the Wiggin children and the saints they are named after. Saint Andrew was the brother of Saint Peter. One of the relics of Saint Andrew is part of the top of his skull, and Ender will become respected for his mental abilities. Valentine is one of the, if not the most, loving characters in the book, and Saint Valentine has become closely connected with love. All three of them will eventually become respected throughout the world, though Ender’s will turn out to be a bit fickle by the time of the sequel (Saint Andrew was crucified, in a far less metaphorical way).

By referring to Ender’s parents as Mother and Father, not only do the general, familiar titles make them universal representatives of parenthood but also the capitalization makes their positions of authority in Ender’s world certain.

The comparison between fighting and war to games and playing is continued in this chapter by Graff. He tells Mother that the fight with Stilson was not a charade, a term she had used even though she knew the boy had been sent to the hospital. He then says that the bugger wars must seem like a game to Ender, a statement that will be even more true at the end of the book.

**CHAPTER FOUR: Launch**

**Summary**
The beginning conversation about Ender this time is how to isolate him from the other kids at Battle School. They want to keep him out of mainstream thinking so that he is able to be creative, but, at the same time, he needs to be able to work well with subordinates; both components are necessary for him to be the leader for whom they are looking.

Ender and the other 19 boys walk to their shuttle, all dressed in the same one-piece uniform, all being watched and filmed, and all, except for Ender, talking and joking around. Ender however, is in a serious mood, and finds nothing funny except his imaginary interview in which the announcer has chosen him as representative of all the boys. Not only is this humorous from the reader’s point of view because Ender is so different from the other children, but also because, from Ender’s point of view, there is so clearly a gap between what he is capable of doing and the impression that is given.

Once on board the shuttle, Ender is already realizing a change in his reference- he can easily reorient himself to see any direction as “up” and he’s thinking of Earth as any other planet with none of the emotional attachment that one would expect of his home. Graff is also coming, since he is the administrator of Battle School. Initially, Ender feels relieved that he already knows someone there, but then, in response to Ender’s humor over picturing Graff standing on his head, Graff singles him out in front of the others as the competent one. As soon as Graff leaves, the other boys turn against him. Ender realizes that help will not come to him and he must take care of the situation himself. He grabs a hold of the arm of the boy hitting him in the head and pulls it hard. The boy is propelled through the air and ends up with a broken arm.

As Ender takes in the fact that he really had meant to inflict pain on the boy, Graff returns and gives the group a lecture. He tells them that they are to be soldiers picked as the best of the best, so they should not get in the way of others; even death has been a consequence of such behavior at Battle School.
Ender is hurt at Graff’s behavior, but as they are leaving the shuttle, Graff tells him that his job is to create the best soldiers in the history of the world, not to make friends with children. The only way Ender can now get along with the others is to be so great that they have to relent. Individuals are tools that do not matter when there are buggers and humankind needs its geniuses so it can survive. Graff admits that this is only half the truth to Ender, but later, once Ender has left, Graff concedes even more to Anderson, one of the teachers. Graff knows what will happen to Ender and that the fate of the world may rest on the boy, and so he hopes, because he is Ender’s friend and recognizes that the boy is good, that Ender is not the one they want.

Notes
Ender’s ability to reorient himself directionally with ease is one which he will come to rely on. In a symbolic sense, it also shows how easily Ender is able to adopt a different frame of reference in other areas of thought. For example, he is less upset over the incident involving the boy with the broken arm than he was over Stilson, his first violent incident. This change in basic arrangement (seeing the Earth as another planet, making “up” be any direction he chooses) foreshadows the way Battle School will change Ender’s mindset.

Along with this, Ender’s shuttle trip makes him realize that the movies he had seen did not capture the violence of the ride. He has also seen movies of battles. Now he is to be fighting them and will come to see that there is more violence in the reality of those as well.

CHAPTER FIVE: Games
Summary
The speakers at the start are now discussing Ender in light of the incident with the boy who broke his arm. While it may have been extreme, the speaker stresses that Ender can never believe that someone will help him. They decide to see what happens to Ender and if he cannot handle it, they will turn to the next child on the list.

When Ender arrives in the dormitory, the only bed left is the lower bunk by the door. He takes it, and follows the instructions to unlock his compartments, one of which contains a heavily padded suit similar to a space suit and a pistol that shoots a focused beam of light.

As he is looking over it, Dap, their assigned “mom”- a man whose job it is to look after them (but only to a degree)- comes in. He tells them that their colors, which they can use to find their way around, will be red-yellow-yellow, and that no intentional injury is allowed at Battle School and will result in being “iced out”, being sent back to Earth.

Ender is sitting by himself at dinner, taking in the giant scoreboard that keeps record of all the teams and the division of the children by their uniform color, when Mick sits down. Mick is an older boy who knows that he is not going anywhere and he warns Ender not to end up like him. Ender knows he will not and he does not like Mick. As he eats with him, he cannot help but think of his family back on Earth and he is near tears for the rest of the night. Thanks to his years of practice being around Peter though, Ender is able to hold back his tears until he is in bed; even there, the tears that do fall, do so silently.

Ender, like the other boys, finds school to be challenging, now that they are competing against so many others as bright as themselves. However, what they really look forward to is the games. In a large open room, there are video and holographic games, and Ender immediately devotes his attention to the latter, played by the older boys. After he took some time to observe the patterns of the game and other players, he challenges and beats an older kid. Ender beats him, winning two of the three games they play, by using tactics that the other boy had not seen before. After winning and watching as other players tried to imitate him, Ender is much more confident of his own abilities to handle Battle School.

Meanwhile, Bernard, the boy whose arm Ender broke, has begun forming his own gang. While Ender watches, Bernard picks on the few other boys rebellious enough to put up any resistance. Shen is one such victim, when
Bernard takes to calling him “Worm” because of his size and the way he walks. Ender knows that approaching Shen would be too direct a way of confronting Bernard, so he creates a student by the name of “God”. He uses the account to send a message to all the boys’ desks, embarrassing Bernard.

Bernard sends Ender a message that he knows it was him and his group of friends begins to go about getting even. But Ender has set up another message to be sent out, this one with Bernard’s name attached to it. As Bernard becomes angry, denying that he sent the message, Dab appears. Although he knows that Ender sent the message, he does not reveal it, but calmly gets Bernard to stop yelling.

Ender is pleased that he has broken Bernard’s control without using violence. Shen and the other Launchies (the term for the group of boys that has recently arrived at Battle School) are also impressed, and they join Ender for breakfast.

Notes
Ender’s names are the most telling parts of the chapter. First, there is Mick’s comment that “Ender” is a good name to have at Battle School, as the purpose is to end the bugger war. This will turn out to be a piece of accurate foreshadowing. Ender’s other nickname in the chapter, “maladroit”, given to him by Bernard, is more noteworthy for its irony. Not only do Ender’s present and future capabilities clearly make this a misnomer, but even in the passage itself, the term is used right after Ender’s agility is mentioned.

CHAPTER SIX: The Giant’s Drink
Summary
The speakers are worried that Ender has become stuck and obsessed trying to figure out the Giant’s Drink, a computer game that drove a previous student to suicide. The other problem with Ender, that his launch group has become divided instead of united, results in Graff being ordered to keep Ender with the group until things improve.

Meanwhile, the group is entering the battleroom for the first time. As they try to figure out how to move in zero gravity, Ender underestimates the effect of his own force and ends up flying away from his handhold. He learns how to maneuver by using his feet to determine the angle from which he leaves walls and changing the way he views his orientation. To compete with Ender, Bernard quickly does the same, but is far more awkward in his attempts. However, Alai, Bernard’s friend, does much better.

After testing the gun and finding that one button makes it act like a laser and another, like a lamp, Ender joins Alai and the two practice pushing off each other in an effort to figure out what can be done if one becomes adrift in the middle of the room. They then test their guns again by shooting each other in the foot, resulting in their feet being frozen stiff. Alai says they should shoot everyone, which, with Bernard and Shen as Ender suggests, they do. Dap comes in and unfreezes everyone, but the incident has made Alai the new leader of the launch group, joining Bernard and Ender’s groups.

Back in the room, Ender is once again playing the Giant game. He keeps getting stuck at the same spot: the Giant gives him a choice between two shot glasses, both filled with a different liquid. The Giant tells him that if he chooses right, he can go to Fairyland. But no matter which drink he chooses, he dies. Suddenly Ender attacks the Giant, digging out his eyes and killing him. Ender is told he can go to Fairyland, but he is so disgusted with himself at killing in a game, that he does not bother exploring.

Notes
A major point in the novel is that it is children at Battle School. Although most of the time, they act so much like adults that the reader can easily forget about this, there are the occasional reminders of their youth. One example is Alai’s comments about Ender’s fart collection when he loses the race to get to the corner.
Alai’s statement that he is not Bernard is a minor example of foreshadowing. As is seen even by the end of this chapter, Alai will be a uniting force in the group, whereas Bernard was the cause of the divide in the first place. Both characters are important in Ender’s early days at the Battle School, although in different ways; Bernard acts as another bully while Alai becomes a friend.

Alai’s name is unusual, especially since one of the few, if not the only, other uses of it applies to the Alai Mountains in Asia. That the character with this name is to ease Ender’s problems, rather than be something to overcome as one would normally view a mountain, is unexpected.

There is another case of foreshadowing, after Ender kills the Giant: “This was supposed to be a game. Not a choice between his [Ender’s] own grisly death and an even worse murder. I’m a murderer even when I play.” These words could be just as aptly applied to the situation at the end of the novel.

**CHAPTER SEVEN: Salamander**

**Summary**

The speaker, presumably Colonel Graff, comments on how Ender has won the game with the Giant, which had been thought impossible before, and how he had effectively dealt with Bernard so that now Ender can be moved out of the group. The other speaker, this one assumed to be Major Anderson, seems occupied with the thought of how the children at Battle School do not act like children but rather like “history”.

Back among the children, Alai tells Ender he figured out how Ender sent the message with Bernard’s name: by creating another student account with the name Bernard, followed by a space. Alai now needs the security system that Ender set up around his own account as other boys are getting close to figuring out how to work the original system. Ender agrees to give it to him, but when the two return to the room, Ender can not open his locker. Alai finds a note on Ender’s bed, saying that Ender has been transferred to the Salamander Army.

Ender is upset over this news, since he was starting to enjoy things the way they were. The two hug and Alai, admitting that Ender’s greatness is what has led to the promotion, tells him that they will always be friends. Alai then kisses Ender on the cheek and says “Salaam”. Ender does not understand the meaning behind the word or action but knows that it is sacred.

Instead of joining his new army immediately, Ender goes to the game room and returns to the game with the Giant, who is now a decayed figure. He goes past this and follows a brook to a playground. However, every time his figure goes to play on any of the equipment, it will not support him. The other children’s laughter drives Ender to follow a path away from the playground, where he reaches a well. There, he is surrounded by wolves with faces of the children from the playground.

Ender discovers that the way to defeat the wolves is back at the playground. He must lead the children figures into traps, whereby they turn into their wolf forms and Ender drags the bodies into the brook. Then he is able to return to the well, which he climbs down. He continues on to a door marked “The End of the World”. When he opens it, Ender finds a beautiful world and a cloud carries him to an enclosed room in a tower. A serpent reveals himself, but before Ender can react, the game is abruptly ended by a message telling him to report to his commander. As he leaves the game room, he wonders what it would be like to live without having to kill or defend himself.

As Ender looks at the Salamander Army, he realizes how much smaller than everyone else he is. To add to his isolation, Petra Arkanian, the only girl in the Army and an outcast, starts to chat with him. Then Bonzo Madrid, a good looking boy, enters. He questions Ender on his age (6 years, 9 months) and his experience working with a group, which Ender does not have. Madrid says his army was given Ender just as they were getting somewhere, and he intends to trade Ender as soon as possible. All together, twice the Army cries out “Salamander”, which Ender recognizes as a sign of solidarity. However, Madrid also says that although Ender
must be present at practices and battles, he is to do nothing, and the commander smacks Petra when she comments.

Ender finds his new uniform in the unsecured, group locker. Petra approaches him and offers to be friends, as well as to train him every day after breakfast. The scheduling will not be a problem because there are actually 9 battlerooms at the center of the school; when one is occupied, another will move to the entrance. As he prepares for bed, Ender also learns that he must wear clothes as he moves about and he cannot talk to those not in his army. He is picked on in the bathroom by those in other armies, but he does not respond; he is pleased that they knew his name though.

When Ender meets Petra for practice the next day, she makes it clear to him that there are questions about how the battlerooms operate that the children do not know the answers to; the adults are thus seen as the enemy for not telling the truth. Petra starts off practice by shooting at target balls with such speed and accuracy that it proves why she is known as the best sharpshooter in the Army. Ender is unable to hit any of the balls, but Petra says she can teach him. They spend the rest of practice talking about technique.

At Army practice, Ender studies Madrid’s tactics instead of doing his own schoolwork as he was told. He quickly realizes how much he does not know, but he also sees ways that Madrid could improve his strategies. Ender is eager to practice what he has seen, but the only people available to him are his old group of Launchies. Madrid is angry when he hears of the practice, because he does not think that anyone in his army should be seen with a group that is typically looked down on so much.

Ender argues with Madrid outside of earshot of the others that the more Ender learns, the sooner he can be traded. Regardless, Madrid cannot control Ender’s free play time. Recognizing his defeat but still wanting to maintain his image, Madrid goes along with the ploy that Ender comes up with- Ender returns to the room, pretending he has lost the argument and then, the next morning, Madrid pretended to change his mind and give Ender permission to continue with the practice sessions.

Ender experiences his first battle, where the battleroom is changed so that the door is in the middle of the room (not near what is thought of as the floor) and boxes, what the players call “stars”, are spread randomly throughout the room. Ender drifted as ordered, and Salamander lost quickly, due to Madrid’s lack of strategy, until the battle deteriorated into individual shootouts. Condor, the other army, was left with just 5 members left, the minimum left to declare victory. Salamander was left with an unusual score, since Ender had only been shot in the legs. Madrid later repeated the orders, insisting that Ender not shoot, which Ender finds stupid. Since he did not fire his gun, and was never fully disabled, Ender had a perfect score on the efficiency list.

Ender keeps with his practice routine. His birthday comes but nobody talks about it, or anything home-related for that matter. Ender finds it difficult to forget though, since Valentine, protecting her from the buggers, was the reason he came to Battle School.

There is another battle, this one against the newly-formed Leopard Army, whose tactic was to move about so that the other army felt surrounded and demoralized. When the Leopard Army went to walk through the gate to declare their victory, thinking that everyone had been demobilized, Ender shoots at them and is able to freeze enough of them that the battle is declared a draw.

Madrid is able to trade Ender to the Rat Army, but he also hits Ender for disobeying orders. Instead, the action brings murmurs of discontent among the rest of the Salamander Army. Ender ends the training sessions with Petra so it does not appear that she is challenging Madrid’s authority in any way. But Ender also signs up for an earth-gravity personal combat course to prevent being beaten up again.
Notes

The title of this chapter is especially meaningful. Salamanders have long been associated with fire, and are thus connected with two other, both mythological, figures that will appear in the novel soon - the phoenix (the name of the army Petra will command) and the dragon (the name of the army Ender will command). Thus, both Petra and Ender, former members of the Salamander Army will go on to run their own armies also with animals linked to fire.

Salamanders are also known for their ability to regenerate limbs. This could metaphorically be applied in any number of ways. For instance, the army itself lost a toon leader when Ender was promoted into it, but Ender grows in his ability and proves himself valuable. Another way would be that Ender is cut off from his old group, as he was starting to fit into it, and now must grow as a soldier.

The other creature that features in this chapter is the serpent. Traditionally seen as tricky and dangerous, this one is no different. It repeatedly kills Ender. As will become clearer later on in the novel, it can even parallel the serpent from the Garden of Eden, as it drives Ender to actions he will regret, and its transformation and eventual escape result in a similar situation to the expulsion of Adam and Eve.

Major Anderson’s comment that the children at Battle School do not act like children, but like history can be seen in a number of ways. Bonzo’s attitude of pride is a stereotypical representation of Spain. Petra, the only girl in the Army, finds herself outcast. Ironically though, in the chapter that begins with talk of how they do not act like children, Ender’s figure in the fantasy game appears as a child figure this time, instead of as an adult as usual. Throughout the novel, there are these fluctuations between childlike and adult behavior.

CHAPTER EIGHT: Rat

Summary

Graff is set on thinking up ways to make the battles the children have more difficult. Although Anderson argues that the battles are such an integral part of the children’s worlds that replacing the battles’ randomness and fairness with intentional disadvantages will ruin the school, he agrees not to take it up with the political leaders, known as the Hegemony.

Ender finds the Rat army’s room to be disordered and their leader, Rose the Nose, has taken advantage of the impression that his Jewish heritage will make him a good leader. Ender soon finds he has nothing to worry about though, as far as the quality of his training goes, when he finds his platoon leader, Dink Meeker. Dink has been watching Ender and asked Rose the Nose to get Ender for him so he could train him. Since Dink operates his part of the army independently, he gets the others under him to learn Ender’s feet-first approach. Especially at the beginning though, they do so with limited success because they are unable to change their orientation to correctly think about the process, as Ender is able to do.

Although Ender is tired after a real practice, he continues practice with the Launchies, while Petra and Dink watch for awhile. When Ender gets back to the room, Rose confronts him about him using his desk (which Rose had forbidden him to do until he froze two soldiers in the same battle) and his decline in the standings. Ender, as Dink had recommended, stands up to Rose and tells him that he was the reason Bonzo had gotten a stalemate in one of the battles. Nonetheless, Rose is annoyed that he had been tricked into accepting Ender and so sends him out first. Though Rose intends for it to be a suicide run, Ender manages to shoot a number of enemy soldiers by emerging quickly, a technique that quickly spreads to the other armies.

Ender continues with his training to become part of a toon. One day, Ender stays behind to see what Dink does after practices - float about in the practice room. Dink says that he has been promoted twice but refused both times because he does not like being watched and manipulated by the teachers, though he loves the game too much to go home. He thinks Rose and the other commanders are crazy, because children are not supposed to be
in such positions. From looking at old books and what he remembers of home, he knows that children are not supposed to act the way those at Battle School do. He finds it disturbing that no one talks of home or cries.

So Dink spends time just floating to prevent going crazy. He says that those in charge will not be nice to Ender and that he does not even think there is a bugger war; the whole thing is just another case of adults lying to keep the power balance on Earth stable. While Ender disagrees with Dink’s assessment that there is no bugger war, it does make him question the meaning behind things.

With the rumor that commanders disapprove of Ender’s practice sessions, fewer Launchies attend them, fearing it will hurt their chances of getting into an army. When some of the boys start to be harassed, Ender wants to stop practice for a few days but those that came, especially Alai, talk him out of it. Some of the older boys begin taunting them at practice, and the scene quickly turns into a fight.

Under Ender’s orders, the boys quickly disperse in all directions, ending up away from the bigger boys and by the door. Ender, however, in using his own flight to push a boy to safety, is still in trouble. Ender manages to use the weightlessness and his personal combat training to fight his way out. Although there are four older boys injured, the teachers do nothing about the incident.

Ender returns to playing the game with the dead Giant but that provides little relief from violence. When Ender crushes the snake in the tower room, a figure of Peter appears in the mirror. The mirror cannot be broken until the snake is thrown at it, at which point more snakes emerge from the hole in the wall where the mirror was. Ender stops playing, but although practices with the Launchies are now without incident under the approval of the commanders (even with some of the soldiers attending for practice), Ender remains disturbed at the side of himself that continues to cause harm.

Notes
A major theme in the book is the adult-child relationship. It is not as clear cut as one would think, since the conversations between adults are often those in which they admit they do not know what they are doing, whereas the children, especially Ender, seem to have a very solid grip on what they will do. Rather than any of the traditional distinctions, the division between adults and children is one of distrust. As proved by Dink’s conversation with Ender, the adults are seen as liars, if not outright, then at least by withholding information. Children, who are often portrayed as covering things up from parents and other adults out of fear of reprimand, are now the honest ones. The distrust in adults, at least to a degree, will prove to be well-placed, but the main point of interest is how the novel challenges traditional concepts of children and adults, often by inverting roles. This is true down to that it is a child who is supposed to save the world.

CHAPTER NINE: Locke and Demosthenes
Summary
Graff questions Major Imbu on how the computer program that runs the fantasy game could have put a picture of Peter in the mirror, but the Major tells him that the End of the World portion of the game is new to them all and they do not know how it is operated. The computer could only have gotten a recent photo of Peter from the land computers if it had determined it necessary for Ender’s development. However, why it is necessary is unknown to the Major and possibly even the program; the game is between each individual child and the computer, and its actions could have any number of meanings for Ender himself.

For the first time since Ender has gone to Battle School, the novel returns to what is going on back on Earth. Valentine has continued celebrating Ender’s birthdays and remembering him, even though the rest of the family seems not to; they have even moved in the years that have passed. Amidst the outdoors, Peter has put up a front of enjoying school and getting along with other children but Valentine knows the truth. She has come across a squirrel that Peter caught, pinned down, and cut open while it died slowly, as an outlet for Peter’s anger. She also knows he studies far more advanced topics at home on his own than he does at school.
One day in the woods, Peter starts to talk to Valentine. He starts off the conversation by talking about whether he would kill her or not, she is not worried because Peter’s defining characteristic is his rationality and ability to stay in control, and it is still in Peter’s best interest not to kill her. Although at first it seems like things are much the way they had been when Ender was still there, Valentine and Peter have developed another level to their relationship- they now talk to each other about events and ideas to help refine their thoughts. This time, Peter tells Valentine he has noticed that Russia is getting ready for war, and the bugger threat will no longer hold the world together. He has a plan though.

Peter and Valentine both have the power to manipulate others, Peter through fear, and Valentine through flattery. Peter wants to use this ability to influence the public mind. He says that if Valentine tells Father that Peter, in order to eliminate stress, needs to be able to talk with his intellectual equals, Father will give them access to the nets through his civilian access. Then they can create identities, so that even though they are just children, they can still be taken seriously.

Peter tells Valentine that they must take advantage of the opportunity to prevent the world from reverting back to how it was, to keep people united. While he admits it is in his nature to control things, he even goes so far as to cry at the thought of being a killer, of controlling with pure evil at its root. Valentine is not sure if Peter is sincere or not, but knows that regardless, the crying as a sign of weakness was a calculated move. It does not matter though, because, even if he is not aware of it, her power is greater than his, and so she agrees to help him.

They start off by observing, and, with temporary identities, writing inflammatory opinions so that people respond. They even write debates beforehand and then post them under different names. In this way, they are able to refine their writing until they create their real identities. With Valentine writing under the name of Demosthenes and Peter under the name Locke, they compose their writings separately so that the two do not appear to have any connection, but express the opinions of the other- with Demosthenes therefore being more fear-based, and Locke, a moderate- so that the characters are kept under control. Although Valentine is initially hesitant to write some of the views, Peter convinces her that it is necessary. They even post in different regional nets so that there does not seem to be any connection between Locke and Demosthenes.

As the phrases that they use in their writing start to appear elsewhere, they know they are being read by an increasing audience. Valentine even receives an offer for Demosthenes to write a weekly column, which she accepts, under Peter’s urging, to get an access code that cannot be traced to her. As the column is picked up by other newsnets, Father sees it and, much to Valentine’s disappointment, he agrees with many of Demosthenes’ views. Locke is soon made a similar offer, to write a contrasting column, which Peter also takes.

Meanwhile, although everything is going well for him, Ender is unhappy. He has so much respect now, that all he is to others is an all-business commander, and not a friend. Even when Alai and Shen reminiscence about the fight with the older boys in zero gravity, they soon apologize for the disturbance. Ender is also unable to find satisfaction in the fantasy game, which he still plays but without understanding what he is supposed to do, what the point is- he always dies in the tower room. It fills him with despair to think of how controlled his life is.

Ender’s predicament leads to a visit to Earth from Colonel Graff. Valentine arrives at her middle school to see I.F. officers around and a message for her to report to the principal’s office, where Graff is waiting. She is relieved when she realizes that he is there about Ender and not about her Demosthenes writings or Peter’s behavior.

Graff tells Valentine that he does not know how to help Ender, or even what the problem with Ender is, but that he needs her help. If she does not, her family will be involved, because he needs to figure something out. However, he does not think such questioning and tests will be necessary because she means so much to Ender.
When he says this, Valentine feels guilty about her relationship with Peter, for being closer to him now than Ender and for giving in to Peter when Ender was able to remain strong in her mind.

She also insists that Ender and Peter are opposites, which Graff says is the most important thing that Ender needs to hear. Graff wants Valentine to write him a letter telling him that, but if she will not, then he will use her previous letters (never seen by Ender) to forge one. Although he has kept Ender isolated, even changing the rules so that Ender will not return to Earth until he is 18, instead of 12 as it had been originally, he now wants to push Ender forward. He tells Valentine that writing the letter will be helping Ender, but he also admits that the bad things they will do to Ender have not started yet.

When Ender reads the letter from Valentine, full of inside jokes, he realizes that because this letter was allowed, that part of his life is also under control by others, just like the rest of it. It ruins the treasured memory of Valentine in his mind to have her become a part of the manipulation, whether she really did it on her own will or the Battle School found out what she meant and is using it. Ender cries openly on his bed, even though it makes the other children uncomfortable to see their respected soldier doing so.

Ender plays the fantasy game, realizing as he does that the letter had just been about Peter, which also upsets him because it means the letter was in response to the School finding out about Peter’s appearance in the game. This time, instead of killing the snake, he kisses it. It turns into Valentine, regretfully for Ender since he had killed the snake so often and did not want it to have been his sister all along. The two figures stand before the mirror in the tower room, and instead of seeing Peter, there is a dragon and a unicorn. When they touch the mirror, it disappears, and they go down a staircase with cheering people. In Ender’s happiness at being with Valentine, he does not realize that all their faces have Peter’s face.

The principal gives Valentine a letter, commending her efforts, assuring her that it worked, and that she will receive an award when the situation is over. As instructed, the principal burns it after she reads it. Valentine is very upset over what she is sure the letter did to Ender, and her next Demosthenes writing is about how Thirds are of such value to humanity.

Notes
Guilford County, North Carolina where the Wiggin family lives now is known as the sight of a decisive battle in the Revolutionary War as well as a location of sit-ins during the Civil Rights movement. Peter and Valentine’s move to this county intentionally coincides with their involvement in national and world affairs as Locke and Demosthenes, respectively. Their actions are based on the democratic principles that the county’s history also reflects.

Peter’s treatment of the squirrel demonstrates the depth of his mental disturbance. Cruelty to animals is seen as a sign of a criminal mind, a trait often identified with serial killers. Peter is still important to Ender though, because he uses him as a control on his own behavior. Ender sees Peter as the extreme, and compares his own actions to Peter’s. When he acts as Peter would, inflicting harm on others, he recognizes this and it stops him from becoming crueler.

Although the book is set in the future, Peter’s observations of Russian troop movements are grounded in the historical context. Card wrote the book in the 1970s, while tensions between the U.S. and Russia remained high. Therefore, having Russia prepare for war against what had become the existing power structure (with the United States in some form as its leader) made sense. The political organization of this future global government is largely created for the purposes of the book, but such details as the Warsaw Pact (an actual agreement between Soviet states as an answer to NATO) draw on this actual world context, making events seem plausible.

Locke and Demosthenes, the pen names that Peter and Valentine take on, also reflect historical realities. While
few of the specific details of the political discussions are given in the book, from what the reader does know, it seems as though Peter maintains Locke’s reasonable views while Valentine stays true to Demosthenes’ fear of the government losing control to another power. Also, Demosthenes’ need to avoid those in power in order to prevent repercussions for his rhetoric is something Valentine herself shares, always worried that she and Peter’s true identities will be revealed by the authorities. However, it is Peter’s arguments that just because they are children does not mean they cannot act, that contribute to the ongoing theme that children are capable and that age should not be used to judge a person’s abilities.

It is in this chapter that there is a hint of another influence to Card’s writing besides the historical. A fan of the Foundation series by Isaac Asimov, Card has Peter talk about how there are patterns in behavior, which bring about times when history can be guided by individuals in a specific direction. This idea is the underlying idea behind Foundation, which tells of the efforts of several key figures in shortening the period of decline of civilization.

As mentioned previously, the scene with the snake in the room in the tower could be seen as a metaphor for the Garden of Eden, especially as it occurs after Colonel Graff admits that the hard times are about to begin for Ender. The snake is cruel, killing Ender a number of times and in the end, it turns out to be a female, Valentine, just as Adam was tempted to actions that led to his expulsion by Eve, after she had consorted with the serpent. When Ender and Valentine’s figures leave the tower room, the crowd on either side have Peter’s face; now that they are out of the Garden of Eden, evil is now a part of their world. Additionally, Valentine and Graff even talk about having read the Bible in the preceding scene.

CHAPTER TEN: Dragon
Summary
Anderson admits to Graff that all the colonel’s plans have worked; Ender has been content since receiving Valentine’s letter. However, this is not to be so for much longer. It is now time to make Ender a commander and see how he handles the rigged scenarios that they have been designing to make the battles even more difficult for him.

Ender is shown to the quarters he will now have, as commander of the Dragon Army, a name that was discontinued after past Dragon Armies consistently lost. Ender is also given his own hook, which is a device that allows commanders to move about as they wish in the zero gravity of the practice rooms. Although he had thought this device would come in handy previously, he now realizes that he does not need it because, unlike the other commanders that have become dependent on it, Ender’s practices have enabled him to control his movements with ease even without it.

Although this could conceivably give him an edge, he soon learns that his army will not. Looking around the barracks, he can tell many of his soldiers are from Launch groups, with no experience at all. The veterans that he has been given are those soldiers who had unremarkable performances and no leadership experience in their previous armies. Ender is not allowed to trade any of them, but must train them, and just learn to deal with the difficult ones.

Ender starts off as commander by having all the newest boys take bunks at the front of the room and then had them go to practice, despite that some of them were not done getting dressed. Once they were outside the battleroom, they were able to finish clothing themselves, while others ran exercises. Then they all went through the door that opened into the middle of the room, propelling themselves across the room using the handholds. When Ender saw that one kid was too small to be able to reach the handholds on the ceiling, he tells him he can use the side ones, but the kid refuses with an attitude.

Once they are all lined up on the far wall, Ender corrects their orientation. “Down” is not the same as it was in the corridor, but rather the direction of the enemy’s gate. As he has them practice this change in view, Ender
figures out who is picking up on things and who is not. Bean, the boy who did not use the side handholds, is the quickest learner. Though he maintains his rebellious attitude, it is he who is able to apply the new orientation and understand the implications of being frozen. Ender demonstrates the latter by freezing both still and moving soldiers. The theory is that if a soldier is moving when he gets shot and frozen, his continued trajectory works to get in the way of the enemy, instead of blocking his own army’s movement.

Ender also shows his army how keeping their feet toward the enemy and, when at a distance, spinning, can make it more difficult for an enemy to freeze them. He has them practice these techniques, with the added difficulties of learning how to manage bumping into each other and doing multiple things at once.

Throughout the practice, Ender picks Bean out to answer questions, singling him out as the only one who knows what he is doing. Afterwards, while Ender is thinking about how quickly he will need to have his new army trained, Bean confronts him. Ender tells him that he is helping Bean earn the other boys’ respect. But, convinced that he can be the best, Bean wants to be a toon leader, which Ender promises him as soon as Bean proves he knows what he is doing and others will follow him. When Bean says that if Ender sticks to that promise, he will be a toon leader in a month, Ender pushes him into a wall, annoyed that what he said has been questioned.

Thinking about it later, Ender regrets bullying Bean, both physically and mentally. However, it also makes him come to the realization that Graff had done the same thing to him, and that it had made him a better soldier than he would have been otherwise. Ender privately makes a promise that he will watch Bean and be his friend, a very similar promise to the one that Graff made about Ender, although Ender does not know it.

The rules are once again changed so that now only those in the same army can practice together in the battlerooms, even during freetime. This effectively ends Ender’s open practice sessions, to be replaced by each army now holding their own. Anderson tells him he must learn to get by without Alai and Shen, and, despite having a good practice session with his own army during their allotted time in the battleroom, Ender misses Alai and the others.

Afterwards, while Ender is in the gameroom, Alai comes over and the two joke around about beating each other in battle. With the realization that such a thing could, and probably will, occur, Alai tells Ender that “salaam”- which he explains means peace- was not meant to be. Alai leaves, but Ender still keeps the memory of when Alai first spoke salaam and kissed him. Although he fears that his friend has parted with him for good, that things will never be the same between them, he will not cry. Since he read Valentine’s letter and the memory of her was tarnished, he will not let anything affect him so deeply. And he is set on defeating his enemy, the teachers.

Notes
As mentioned previously, Ender’s army is associated with fire, showing a connection between the Salamander and Phoenix armies, both of which he served in previously. One also cannot overlook the fact that Ender saw a dragon in the mirror in the tower room. Because dragons as mythological creatures have a wide range of attributes associated with them- cunning, danger, even good luck- it is hard to pick just one aspect that shows its connection with Ender. Instead, the dragon was probably picked as a symbol for Ender because of its complex nature; it can capture both Ender’s intelligence and violence. Additionally, there is an old weapon called a dragon, so the name also reflects Ender’s involvement in battles.

CHAPTER ELEVEN: Veni, Vidi, Vici
Summary
Colonel Graff thinks Ender should have more time to prepare his army before they enter into the battle schedule, as is customary, but Anderson insists that the computer knows what it is doing and it said that Ender
could handle it. The two officers also talk about events back on Earth, which have been stirred up by activity on the nets.

Ender has broken his army into groups of five and thus given them the ability to think and work on their own, while remaining a part of the larger operation. His army has worked out so well that he is unsure who deserves the credit, whether the success was mostly due to his own talents at training soldiers or the teachers’ aptitude at seeing hidden potential. Ender is ready for battle, and Dragon Army’s first one is with Rabbit Army.

That morning he has his army go to the gym beforehand to get warmed up. He even takes more time than before at the gate before entering the battleroom to determine each toon’s basic actions, sending each one in a different direction. Ctoon had most of the damage because of their assault position, but by the end of the battle, only one soldier was completely frozen. Major Anderson comes out to give Ender the teacher hook to do the honors of unfreezing both armies. Carn Carby, the commander of Rabbit Army, loses gracefully, going up to Ender immediately afterwards to congratulate him.

Dragon Army goes to breakfast happily, and Ender even gives them extra time as a celebration. Even as he is happy with the win, Ender still sees ways for his army to improve, especially on their aim, which he has them practice. Then, since he has won his battle, Ender is able to go to the commanders’ mess for the first time for lunch. Although while he is getting his food, the room becomes silent, commotion gradually starts back up. Ender is then able to look around, and sees the scoreboard in this mess has categories for each commander, rather than for each army as a whole.

Dink comes up to him, saying that Ender will not win against him and warning him against getting too confident. However, Ender and Dink both feel the same awkwardness with their friendship as Ender had felt with Alai, now that they are competing against each other, and so the conversation does not last long. Petra even avoids looking at Ender, but Carn Carby again talks to him, saying that the other commanders are not treating Ender well and he hopes Ender beats the next army he faces to make Rabbit Army look better.

The next morning, when Ender gets out of his shower, he realizes they have a battle again. With this, since armies had never before had battles in two consecutive days, Ender realizes that they cannot count on any of the rules, and tells his army they had better get used to it.

This battle is against Petra’s Phoenix Army, which Ender had been a soldier in before becoming commander of Dragon Army. As such, he is familiar with their maneuvers to some degree, but they are also a more flexible army than Rabbit, able to respond to Ender’s tactics quicker and with greater success. Dragon Army still wins but more of them have been frozen than were in the battle with Rabbit Army, more than Ender thinks he will have in any other battle. Petra is not a gracious loser, and is so angry that Ender is in doubt of whether they will be friends again.

After one week, Dragon Army has won all seven battles that they fought. Everyone knows they are good, that Ender’s first win was not a fluke, and so he is once again picked on outside of the battleroom, though it does not bother him. Instead, to pick up new tactics, Ender starts watching old videos of the battles with the buggers. He realizes though that the humans reacted slowly, and so he turns to the buggers’ disciplined way of fighting to learn. Even so, it is a frustrating process, because the videos are incomplete, with many parts edited out, especially when it comes to Mazer Rackham’s victory.

One day while Ender is watching the videos (as are a number of others, trying to figure out what Ender was learning), Major Anderson comes and takes Ender to see Graff. The colonel questions Ender about why he is winning and how is soldiers are holding up, as well as about Ender’s personal activities- why he is looking at the videos, and no longer playing the fantasy game. The meeting ends when Ender questions when they will
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give his army someone worthy of competition, at which Anderson hands him a note. It is the second battle of
the day for Dragon Army (this one against Salamander Army), and it is ten minutes from then.

When Ender tells his army, they complain, but winning is more important to them than their own tiredness.
When they arrive late to the battleroom, there are no stars and the room is bright and empty. Ender realizes that
Bonzo’s army has surrounded Dragon Army’s entrance gate, out of their sight. To counter that, Ender divides
his army into groups with a person serving as a shield, one as a shooter, and two as throwers, to launch the
shield and shooter through the gate and then they themselves begin shooting. Though they lose more soldiers
than in any other battle, they win quickly, since Salamander Army is all in one spot, against a wall, making
them easy targets.

Ender is angry at the teachers for pairing them with an army so bad, and he even has Bean say that Salamander
Army should have kept moving around the door. While Ender realizes that in doing so, he has dishonored
Bonzo, he does not have time to do anything about it, to prepare for Bonzo’s counterattack.

Shortly before lights out, Bean notices he has a message from Ender for him to come see him. In Ender’s room,
they talk about why Bean is a good soldier, until Ender makes him realize that the game is only important as a
way for the school to find real commanders for the war against the buggers. Ender then admits that he does not
know if he can keep winning, but he knows that he cannot lose. He wants Bean to have a small group of soldiers
to try out new tactics, stupid things that no one else would do. Bean understands Ender’s admittance and agrees
to do it. The lights go out, so Bean spends the night in Ender’s room.

Notes
Titling the chapter “Veni, Vidi, Vici”, Julius Caesar’s infamous phrase translating to “I came, I saw, I
conquered”, reinforces the tie between the children and history, As is said in Chapter Seven, those at Battle
School do not act like children, but rather like history. Now Ender is being compared to Julius Caesar through
his record of military victories.

The speakers, Colonel Graff specifically, are also of note because he was unknowingly exactly correct in his
comment that it is because of those people on the nets that Ender is going through the difficult trials of Battle
School. Peter and Valentine are at least partly responsible for the events on the nets through their pseudonyms
Locke and Demosthenes, and it is indeed because of Valentine that Ender agreed to go to Battle School
originally.

CHAPTER TWELVE: Bonzo
Summary
General Pace, the chief of the I.F. military police, comes to talk with Colonel Graff after Dap (presumably
Major Anderson) fills a report saying that Graff’s treatment of Ender has been dangerous. Graff defends his
methods, arguing that he knows what he is doing. General Pace then directs the conversation towards his main
concern that nothing is being done to prevent a plot, led by Bonzo, to kill Ender. Graff remains convinced
though that he cannot do anything about it, so Ender will never think an adult will help him. The matter is left at
that, as Graff has complete authority over Battle School.

During practice, Bean’s team works with a deadline, a thin strand of twine. While it is of no use in getting in the
way of the enemy, it is especially handy to change direction quickly. As the army walks back from practice,
Ender notices a number of boys acting suspicious. With this in mind, he does not stop when Petra calls out to
him. She catches up to him, and warns him of the plot, but Ender tells her he already knows. When she realizes
that the reason Ender did not stop is because he thought she might have been involved, she leaves upset. Dragon
Army, overhearing the conversation, now knows that people are trying to hurt Ender and insist on escorting him
back to his room.
Once there, Ender discovers a message from Dink, warning him not to be alone. Although Ender is glad to know Dink is still looking out for him and he is confident in his army’s ability to discourage any hostile action towards him, he dreams about Stilson that night. In the dream, Stilson and his gang beat up Ender, as Ender had beat up him. When he awakes though, he clearly thinks that the teachers will protect him.

Dragon Army continues winning battles, but it becomes increasingly difficult, with rule changes such as the other army’s frozen soldiers are thawed and reenter action after five minutes. As a result of the challenge and frequency of battles, the entire army is exhausted. Ender falls asleep for most of the morning. When he awakes, he goes to the gym to become reinvigorated, but while he is showering afterwards, he realizes he is alone. This is not the case for long though, as Bonzo, Bernard, and five other boys soon enter the showers.

Realizing his situation, Ender taunts Bonzo about honor until the other boy commits to a one-on-one fight. After Bonzo takes off his clothes to make them as equal as possible, Ender soon realizes that his edge in having taken the combat classes is not as great as he thought, since it is evident that Bonzo has learned it as well. The showers create a dangerous space for a fight, with all the projecting metal, but Ender decides to use the location to his advantage- he turns on the hot water so that his body, still soapy from his interrupted shower, is even more slippery.

Dink arrives and tries to get Bonzo not to fight, but his yelling about Ender’s importance, Bonzo is just angered, because he knows he himself is not. Dink is held back and silenced by the other boys in Bonzo’s gang. Bonzo and Ender begin to fight, and, after a few maneuvers, he is able to bring his head up into Bonzo’s face. While Bonzo is recovering, Ender moves and kicks him in the crotch. Bonzo falls silently, and while his friends and the medical staff rush to help him, Dink leads Ender away. Ender now realizes that no one will help him, a thought that brings him to tears, because he did not want to hurt Bonzo.

Ender awakes later that day and, even though Dragon Army had already had a battle that day, there is a slip of paper announcing another, this time against two armies. Ender quickly rinses up before the battle, noting how the bathroom has been restored to normal, no trace of the fight between himself and Bonzo. When he and his army arrive at their gate, they look out to find that stars have been placed to block their view. Ender sends Bean to find out what is on the other side, by using his deadline. He then decides to use a formation, the first time the Dragon Army has ever done so, but in an unconventional way. The formation is a distraction and launching pad to send six soldier over to the enemy’s gate to perform the victory ceremony, thereby ending the battle.

Anderson announces that the rules will be revised to prohibit such tactics in the future and then ignores Ender’s call for equality, but the boys, both from Dragon Army and the others, still cheer Ender. Then, when the soldiers ask about practice, Ender says there will be no practices, shouting that he does not care about the game anymore. He goes to his room, but he is not alone for long. Bean comes in to tell Ender that he (Bean) has been transferred to Rabbit Army, of which he is now commander. He also tells Ender that many of Dragon Army’s other leaders have also been transferred to command positions. Ender, however, is so upset over having hurt Bonzo, even after Bean tells him that Bonzo has now been sent home, that he says he will no longer play the game.

Anderson and Graff come into Ender’s room with a paper stating Ender’s graduation and assignment to Command School. This news, along with Ender’s abrupt leave with the officers, has Bean very concerned about the reason for this breakdown of the rules. That night, he cries about not seeing Ender again, but despite this episode, Bean is a soldier and not a child.

On board the shuttle, Ender finds out that Major Anderson is now in command of the Battle School, and Colonel Graff has been reassigned. He is traveling with Ender, as is Colonel Pace. Once on Earth, a kind of extended layover en route to Command School, Ender discovers that he has grown unaccustomed to the planet and finds adjusting to the environment difficult.
The chapter ends with two speakers- one of them the promoted Anderson and the other, Major Imbu, who had previously discussed the fantasy game with Graff- discussing the recent events. Their conversation reveals that Ender had killed Bonzo during their fight, just as he had Stilson. But the fear of the buggers, with the situation drawing nearer, justifies pushing Ender to such limits.

Notes
The structure of this chapter seems to support Bean’s observation that the rules are breaking down. Unlike previously, where the speakers were only present in the beginning of the chapter, there is now an additional conversation at the end of the chapter. And, just as Bean feared it is a result of trouble with the bugger war, the speakers are indeed discussing that situation with a good deal of fear over it.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN: Valentine

Summary
Two speakers (it is not possible to tell whom, but they both hold high positions on Earth) are discussing the Wiggin children. They know that Demosthenes and Locke are Valentine and Peter, respectively, but decide not to expose them. They comment on how odd it is that their writings do not match their personalities, but consider that it is probably for the best.

The Demosthenes and Locke identities are becoming more and more established in the public mind, especially Demosthenes. Peter is not happy that it is Valentine’s figure that is receiving all the attention, and, even after she assures him that the deeper respect that Locke is seeking just takes longer to achieve, he remains upset. Not only has Father continued referencing Valentine’s column and Demosthenes has been offered a public position, but Valentine herself is starting to become more comfortable with many of his stated opinions.

After school one day, Graff is waiting to take her to Ender, Valentine being the only one in the family that the boy cared to see. They arrive at the lakeside property and, before Valentine goes to talk with Ender, the issue of trust is brought up. Graff tells her that he knows who Demosthenes is but that she does not need to worry about it, and he will not bug her conversation with Ender. In return, he will ask questions afterwards, and he hopes she will not tell Peter about the day’s events. Ender’s break has been extended so much as he has seemingly lost interest in returning to his training. Graff once again hopes Valentine will help get rid of this mood and, this time, she is much more willing to do so.

Valentine and Ender greet each other and go out on the lake on the raft that Ender built. In response to his comment about the two of them being strangers, Valentine moves to tickle him, but he stops her, clearly tense before he recognizes the familiar action. After swimming, Valentine lies down on the raft. A wasp lands near her, but she ignores it. Ender, though, kills it. He tells her that he was an excellent soldier.

Valentine tells him about Peter’s plan and how they have used the names Locke and Demosthenes on the nets. When she brings up how she is supposed to get him to return to training, Ender corrects her, that it is not studies, but just games, and says he is tired of the manipulation that is a part of them. He tells her how he used to spend time looking at the videos of the buggers over and over, but they remain a difficult enemy for him because the videos do not show enough of them for him to understand them. Once he understands an enemy completely, he loves that enemy but it is at the same time that he destroys him completely.

With this revelation, Valentine begins to question the boundary between Ender and Peter. However, she is able to honestly tell him that she is not afraid of him. They talk about how Peter will one day gain power, and Valentine realizes that enough of what makes Peter the way he is, is in Ender that regardless of how drained and disinterested he seems, there is motivation in him. She finds it, when she says she is concerned about herself (with regards to the buggers), and brings up how she used to defend him from Peter.

With that, Ender says he is afraid he will not be able to beat the buggers, since, after all, he could never beat
Peter. He does not want the responsibility of being the one to save everyone, so that he is a killer either way, responsible for killing the buggers if he does do battle with them or for the deaths of people if he does nothing. Valentine mistakenly takes that to mean that Ender wants to beat Peter, but really what he want is for Peter to love him, something that Valentine cannot assure him of. She knows when she leaves though, that Ender will return to his studies.

When he returns to the house, Ender gets ready, a quick matter since he has no possessions, and he and Graff leave. In the car, Ender realizes that his stay at the house on the lake was to make him, after having spent so much of his life at Battle School, love Earth, which he now does. They arrive at the spaceport, and Graff tells him that he will continue traveling with him. Ender thinks about how he has used his own power, and what Earth, with Valentine there, means to him. Graff touches Ender’s hand at one point, but Ender soon decides that it is just another calculated move.

When they arrive at their tug, Graff talks to the captain, who is quickly furious at him; because I.F. Command is in a secret location and the captain does not have the security clearance to know it, the captain will be assigned to stay there until the end of the bugger war, an indefinite period of time. It is a three month trip to get out there, and Ender and Graff pass the time by talking, mostly about buggers. The most interesting aspect of the creatures, with their ant-like appearance, is that they can communicate instantaneously. Humans now have the technology to do so as well, through a device called an ansible, but the buggers’ method, which does not use a machine, is not understood.

Graff also tells Ender that Earth is not defending itself at all, but rather they have sent out ships to the bugger home world to attack. Although the ships have not seen any sign of the buggers en route, humans have sent more ships over the years as the technology has become better. The ships will all arrive around the same time, in about five years, at which point, they will need someone, most likely Ender, to command them. Ender asks why the war started in the first place, but although there are many answers given, no one knows. Graff’s personal opinion is that it is out of fear of the other’s intentions since the humans and buggers cannot communicate with each other. Regardless, the buggers did attack first, and both Graff and Ender are agreed that humans want to survive.

Notes
Once again, the contrast between Ender and Peter is called into question. Ender kills the wasp; Peter killed a squirrel. While there are differences, such as Peter tortured the squirrel and Ender said that the wasps will sting without provocation, Valentine is still surprised at such action. Her thought that it is difficult to have an identity without becoming it, although it was in regards to herself as Demosthenes, is also true for Ender. He knows he will be a killer, no matter what he does, and Battle School has indeed turned him into one.

Talking with Graff on the tug about the buggers shows that he is once more ready to destroy his enemy, since he is seeking to understand them better. Command School being on Eros is another indication of this; Eros is the Greek god of passionate love, and Ender has said that he loves his enemy at the same time he destroys them. Graff’s line about how we would kill all the buggers if we could, will prove to be, unfortunately for Ender, a fairly accurate prediction.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN: Ender’s Teacher
Summary
Graff and Admiral Chamrajnagar discuss the future of Ender’s education. Graff will be kept on as an advisor for Ender’s education, but it is up to others to teach him about weapons and introduce him to the feeling of mysticism of commanding a fleet. There are also other children that have been brought over from Battle School.

Ender finds Eros to be disconcerting. The slope of the floors downward combined with lower gravity makes him feel like he is falling. The low ceilings and presence of so many strangers around does not help. All the
people remain strangers because of Ender’s continued isolation, but it allows him to devote his time to studies. The battleroom has been replaced with the simulator, a highly developed video game that gives increasingly more control and variability to the player, such as having command over more ships. After one year though, the simulator was no longer a challenge to Ender.

The next morning, he wakes up to see an old man sitting silently in the room. The old man will not speak and the door will not open, so Ender does a few exercises, until the man grabs his leg, sending Ender to the floor. The old man does not move again until Ender goes to get his desk and then, in just a second or so, he has Ender in a hold that the boy is unable to move at all. It is only then that the old man speaks. He tells Ender that he will be his enemy, one that knows more than him, and therefore his teacher. They fight again, but after that, the man tells Ender that they will be fighting through the simulator, him coming up with increasingly more difficult scenarios for Ender to overcome. Ender attacks him as he is about to leave, but the old man strikes back quickly. Ender then asks his name; the man replies that he is Mazer Rackham.

Ender and Mazer are together from that time on. With his teacher though, Ender is finally able to see the complete versions of the videos of the bugger wars. Mazer explains that he was sent on a starship afterwards to slow his aging so that he would be able to teach the next commander. No one knows the buggers better than him. Ender asks to see how Mazer defeats them, but the video is exactly as he had thought, with a single explosion ending the battle.

Mazer thinks the buggers operate like an ant colony. Because he had hit the ship carrying the queen, all the others ceased to act, and eventually died from a lack of will. Ender is able to see in the video what Mazer believes. One ship does seem to contain a queen-like creature, controlling all other movements. It does not seem to have occurred to the buggers that Mazer would shoot and kill her.

Ender also finds out why Eros feels so uncomfortable to him- it is a post built by the buggers. When they blacked it out, humans sent a tug to investigate, which continued transmission even while the buggers killed the crew. Even if the action was a result in the difference in perspective of the importance of the individual (it is only the queen’s life that matters to the buggers), the fact that they still killed the humans does not excuse them in Mazer’s mind. When humans were able to take over the post, they learned much of their technology, such as gravity manipulation.

In future battles, the buggers will have learned from the experience and it will not be possible to simply target the queen ship. But humans do have intelligence and new weapons, including one called Dr. Device. It uses a sphere-shaped field that destabilizes molecular connections so that, when the field is gone, only a collection of dirt remains. It even cuts through shields.

The simulator is changed so that Ender can work with squadron leaders. Although they are not face-to-face, Ender can communicate with them through a headset. He is worried about how he will get to know his leaders, but once he puts on the headset, he finds he already knows them- they are Alai, Bean, Petra, Dink, Crazy Tom, Shen, Carn Carby, other students Ender knew at Battle School. It starts off fun, and Ender learns the strengths and weaknesses of each as a leader, so that he is able to use them more effectively with time. Watching their battles, Ender realizes that they have started acting like the buggers, reacting quickly, but demonstrating a degree of independence that the buggers never could.

The disadvantages Ender will face in battles against the buggers are that he will always be outnumbered, and the enemy adapts to new tactics quickly. Because of this, Mazer tells him that he will try to destroy Ender if he can. Ender is not the first student and his happiness is not important; winning is all that matters, and if Ender is weak, Mazer intends to expose it. Ender says that he is stronger.
In their first battle, they are able to use Dr. Device because the enemy is grouped close together enough for a chain reaction to take effect. The battles are harder after that, but the squadron leaders and Ender develop a deeper trust in each other. Although Ender knows it does not matter, he is lonely, as his position as commander separates him, while those under him become closer with each other. Ender starts to have twisted dreams on a regular basis, while the simulator controls his waking life. With more battles, Ender starts to fear that his difficulty sleeping is responsible for making some of his mistakes.

The pressure starts to affect everyone. Petra breaks in the middle of a battle, and, after that, Ender becomes more cautious of using commanders too often. One night, Ender awakes to discover that he has chewed on his own fist in his sleep, a sign of his anxiety. He becomes concerned about the fate of those who failed before him, and Mazer’s dismissal of this, does not stop his concern. Ender loses interest in eating. Other commanders begin to break as Petra did, as the battles become longer. Ender himself passes out during a practice, and is out for a few days. When he awakes though, he is immediately sent back into battle.

Ender dreams of hearing Graff and Rackham discuss him with sympathy, but he thinks of it as just a dream. His life is a cycle of sleeping and battles. On his last day at Command School (though it is unknown to him that it is such), he awakes to find himself free and alone. He soon discovers he has nothing to do though, and goes to the simulator. He is tired, but Rackham tells him of the importance of the coming battle. There are other people there who will be observing the battle to evaluate Ender as a kind of final examination. A planet has been added to the scenario, and Rackham leaves it up to Ender if he should use the Little Doctor against the planet itself or not.

The squadron leaders do not know that the battle determines if Ender graduates or not. Ender ponders the thought of losing, just so he can go home. Then the bugger ships appear, and outnumber the human ships by incredible odds. Ender is overwhelmed, and does not know what to do until Bean makes a comment reminding everyone about the last battle they had fought in Battle School, the one against two armies. With that, the seriousness is gone and Ender no longer cares about the rules. He sees a way out, to prevent himself from becoming a commander.

Ender sends his fighters in. They seem to travel at random, but all the while, they are moving closer to the planet. As they come into range, the fighters focus their Little Doctors on the planet. With that, the planet and the bugger fleet are destroyed.

Ender takes off his headset and realizes everyone in the room is cheering and congratulating him. He does not understand, having expected them to be annoyed at his method of destroying the fleet. Mazer Rackham appears and explains it to him. Since he became Ender’s teacher, the battles had all been real. Ender had sent real men into the fights and had destroyed the real home world of the buggers. Ender leaves the room and sleeps.

Graff and Rackham wake him up the next day, but Ender is extremely upset over their trickery. He did not want to kill. Graff argues that they had to trick him, because he would not have been able to do it otherwise, and Rackham adds that it had to be a child so they did not know the reality of battle. With the victory over the buggers though, events on Earth are collapsing into war and they want to move Ender to a safer location. Ender, however, ignores them. The two adults talk among each other about how they have pushed Ender so far, that maybe it was too far, but it did win the war. When they leave, Ender again falls asleep.

He sleeps through the conflict on Earth, his odd reams occupying his mind for five days. When he wakes up, he realizes there is someone nearby, and reacts, ready to kill. It is Alai though, who tells him what has been going on while he slept. The I.F. seems to be winning against the Polemarch, but the whole Earth is united in their love of Ender, as they have seen the complete videos of the battle he won. The other squadron leaders enter the room, and announce that the conflict on Earth has ended, through the Locke Proposal. They are concerned about Ender, but he has realized after he was ready to kill Alai, that he will be okay, but he is through commanding.
When Alai asks aloud what they will all do now that the wars are all over, Petra says they’re children, so they’ll probably have to go to school, at which they all laugh.

Notes
Admiral Chamrajnagar’s feelings about the fleet being something sacred, like a religion, are reminiscent of part of the Foundation novel by Isaac Asimov. In it, a character named Salvor Hardin establishes a religion in which the priests control the technology of the civilizations. Card may have had this in mind when he had the Admiral echo similar sediments about spaceflight. This seems to be true in light of his comment to Graff about how he as a soldier would never understand, that it is a religion.

The Locke Proposal gives an indication of Peter’s success. As events on Earth played out as he predicted, he was apparently able to use his persona on the nets to suggest a peace.

The book’s title becomes even more meaningful after this chapter. Although previously it may have seemed as though it was all in the hands of the adults, now it is revealed that the war with the buggers was a game only to Ender, and the other children, as a result of the adults’ deceit. To the adults themselves, it was reality. Ender did fulfill the comment by the boy at Battle School about his name being appropriate and Graff’s wish to destroy all the buggers. Events also proved the children’s distrust of adults to be well-placed.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN: Speaker for the Dead
Summary
Graff and Anderson are sitting by the lake at the house where Ender stayed during his break on Earth. Graff has been acquitted of the charges against him for the activities involving Ender, primarily by arguing that it was essential to winning the war. Although at the beginning of the conversation, he says now he might just do nothing, he later admits that he is the new Minister of Colonization. The government intends to get rid of the population limitation laws (which had made Ender, a Third, stand out even more when he had first been on Earth) and send the excess population to colonize former buggle colony worlds. He is sure people will go, because of their belief that they can make a better life for themselves.

Anderson, for his part, says he prefers dealing with games, where there are clear rules, and winners and losers. As such, he is considering taking a job as commissioner of a football league. The conversation turns to Ender. Graff tells him that the lakeside property is Ender’s now, but the boy will never be allowed back on Earth. It would be too dangerous, since people would want to use him for their own means, even if Ender himself just wants to rest. Demosthenes, whose identity Graff refuses to reveal, at first publicly called for Ender’s return, but has since retired from the nets. Graff knows she has realized that her brother’s return is not possible.

Ender has watched Graff’s trial from Eros. He realizes that it is really his own actions that are on trial, but he finds it odd that although images of what he did to Stilson and Bonzo are shown, there is no mention of the buggle deaths. He is burdened by it all equally. His life now is limited, as the other children return home and only a few adults continue to listen to his ideas. Eros is busy, with the arrival of colonists about to set out for the buggle worlds, but Ender does his best to avoid them. He can not stand their praises and excuses for his actions during the buggle war.

Valentine is among them though, and she is able to see him. She tells Ender that she is going out with the first colony and she wants Ender to come too. Before she left Earth, she made sure that he could never return there, so Peter, who has become quite powerful, would not be able to use him. With the evidence of Peter’s treatment of Ender and the squirrel as blackmail, she arranges for herself and Ender to be free of Peter’s control by going to the colony.

Ender has his own opinions about the situation though. He does not want to live on a world of the buggers whom he killed and he thinks Valentine is trying to control him, just as others have. She argues that no one gets
to control their own life, but at least she has good intentions. She knows he is still a kid at heart and wants the chance to be with him. She also informs him that Mazer has agreed to be the pilot of the colonization ship, and Ender has been offered the position of governor of the first colony. Ender agrees, to Valentine’s happiness, but he tells her he is doing it for the buggers, to try to repair some of what he did to them by learning more about them.

During the voyage and into the early stages of colonization, Valentine writes a history of the bugger war, with the final volume of it about Ender. Ender adapts to being a leader by persuasion and, most importantly, learns about what is left of the buggers’ world. The human colonization develops as a world, more concerned about what is going on locally than back on Earth. Peter is by then Hegemon of Earth, and people continue on their way to the colony, called Ender’s World, to establish further settlements.

Ender sets out with a boy, Abra, to find a location for the new colony. While looking around at a distant location, Abra makes a comment that leads to Ender’s realization of why the area seemed so familiar to him. The buggers have reconstructed scenes from the fantasy game that Ender used to play, with the giant’s body and playground now grown over but still evident in the landscape. Although at first they suspect it might be intended as part of a plot of revenge, Ender then thinks of it as a way for them to communicate with him.

Abra argues with Ender so that he is able to come along a little farther, but Ender is set on going into the tower alone. The room inside imitates the scene, with surprisingly well-done artwork depicting the snake’s head on the carpet and an image in the mirror. He then knows that they explored and collected his thoughts to create what is meant as a message.

When he removes the mirror from the wall, he discovers a fertilized pupa of the queen bugger. He realizes he is recalling images that should not be in his memory, such as his first battle with the buggers, seen from the queen’s perspective. It was then that she realized that humans did not forgive them and would kill them. Ender asks how the buggers can live again, and she once again communicates with him through images, telling him what to do with the cocoon so that the queen may hatch. When he says that he cannot, the same thing will only happen again, he suddenly feels the depth of the buggers’ grief over killing the humans.

The buggers know Ender through his dreams and know he was not aware of what he was doing to them. He is the only human they know though, and thus, the only one they can make an attempt to talk to. They used what time they had left to build the place to bring Ender to the cocoon. The queen then tells Ender that, like himself, they did not know what they were doing was murder, and she wants him to believe that they can live in peace. Ender agrees, saying that he will find a world where they will be safe. He takes the cocoon with him.

Once back at the settlement, Ender writes a short book, telling events from the queen bugger’s perspective and writing how the buggers now welcome the humans to fill their old worlds. He signs it “Speaker for the Dead”, and, as it is quietly read by people all over Earth, it sparks a new tradition. Now when someone dies, there is a service at which someone speaks the truth, both the good and the bad, about the deceased person.

Although the activity is received with mixed feelings on Earth, it becomes the religion in the colonies, with each one having a Speaker for the Dead. Peter, by then dying, communicates with Ender through the ansible and has his brother write as his Speaker. Ender’s two books are called the *Hive-Queen* and the *Hegemon*.

Eventually, Ender tells Valentine that they need to leave the colony, because Ender needs pain in his life, just as it has always been there. The two go from world to world, Ender speaking for the dead and Valentine writing histories of the living. Ender carries the cocoon of the hive-queen with him, looking for a place for the buggers to be born once again.
Notes
The chapter confirms Ender’s suspicion that someone was manipulating his dreams; it was the buggers trying to learn from him so they could communicate. Interestingly, it is through images of the game which Ender so disliked because it kept forcing him to be a killer that the buggers, whom he really did kill in a supposed game, are able to do so.

This chapter sets up events for the next book in the series, which even has the same title as the chapter. Without giving away the second book, the ending words, that Ender looked for a long time, hint that he does eventually find a place for the hive-queen.

OVERALL ANALYSES
CHARACTER ANALYSIS
Ender - The novel covers much of Ender’s youth, beginning when he is a six-year-old boy who is helpless against his older brother and ending sometime after his 10th birthday, when he has learned the lessons of Battle and Command School - no one will ever come to his aid, adults will deceive and manipulate, and, under certain circumstances, he too can be driven to kill to ensure his own survival. With this last lesson, he is the average of Peter and Valentine, killing but regretfully, with all of the Wiggin children intelligence that makes it possible for him to do so. Ender rarely comes across as a child, either to those around him who treat him more with the respect worthy of a commander, or to the reader. As such, he is different, and the isolation that comes with it, is something that Ender occasionally laments. It also makes him the only person capable of understanding the buggers, who have likewise been placed in a situation where they are misunderstood. Ender is the intelligent youth who is able to accomplish all that is expected of him, though he is quietly going through his own struggles, whether as a result of loneliness, fear, or regret.

Valentine - Valentine changes from a young girl in fear of Peter to one who comes to realize her own power. By the time Ender returns from Battle School, she has changed so that she is now willing to convince him to continue training for her own good. When he finishes with Command School, she is able to make sure that Peter can never use Ender for his own purposes. Throughout the novel, Valentine consistently defends Ender as being different from Peter, often seeing the two as polar opposites, good and evil. She encounters problems when she allies herself with Peter in taking on the identity of Demosthenes. While she starts off completely in disgust with the character’s opinions, she begins to become more comfortable with it, so that, by the end, she is at ease enough as Demosthenes to continue writing under the name. Valentine is significant to the outcome of the story in that it is her that leads Ender to go to first Command School and then to Ender’s World, where he discovers the hive queen.

Peter - Overall, Peter demonstrates the themes of capable children versus adults, and good versus evil. In the case of the latter, the line blurs somewhat from the beginning of the novel to the end, as both Ender and Peter change. At the start, through Ender and Valentine’s eyes, Peter is capable of anything, no matter how bad it seems. Although he says he fears becoming even worse, Valentine is never completely convinced that he means it. Even his sensitive words to Ender at night do not seem to make a difference as Ender continuously compares his own behavior to Peter’s, as a control to prevent becoming too violent. When the bugger war ends, he ends the fighting on Earth through the Locke Proposal, and becomes Hegemon, basically ruling the world. Again, there is a parallel between Peter and Ender, who is at the same time, governor on the first colony. Few details are given on Peter’s rule, but the reader is left to assume that it was as successful as Ender’s.

Graff - Graff is significant as a kind of omniscient manager of events. It is Graff who receives the reports on the bugger expedition, knows the true identities of Locke and Demosthenes, and decides what will be done to Ender in order to shape him into a commander. Although he is put on trial after the war, he is pretty much able to do what he sees fit. For his job and the war effort, he knows that Ender will be put through a lot of difficult situations, but he says that, in the end, he will be Ender’s friend. It would seem that he cares about the boy and...
Ender does recognize how Graff has made him a good commander, but overall, he epitomizes the manipulation of the adults.

**PLOT STRUCTURE ANALYSIS**

The plot is chronologically linear, and predominately told in the third person, through the point of view of Ender. This is not the case when the story looks at events back on Earth, when Valentine becomes the main focus, or in the beginnings of the chapters when adults are conversing, usually somewhat mysteriously. Readers therefore are slightly more aware of the overall plot than Ender, but also do not know how events look from the bugger’s point of view until the end of the novel, at which point Ender does as well.

The overall problem driving the plot is that of the conflict between buggers and humans. This leads to a conflict between children and adults, as the adults manipulate the children to train them to be able to fight in the war. The plot is generally driven by the scenarios that the adults, mainly Graff, place Ender in. Although there are few relationships that are emphasized, technology has a significant role, especially through the games that become central to the children’s lives.

Characteristic of the science fiction novel, Ender, an unlikely hero, is taken to Battle School in space, where he learns to fight in battles in zero gravity. He learns that the Earth is worth saving and continues on to Command School, where he unknowingly destroys the alien civilization of the buggers through a devastating weapon. As humans push farther into space, Ender finds the hive queen and is given a chance to redeem his actions.

**THEMES - THEME ANALYSIS**

**Children versus Adults** - Ender sees this as the major conflict; once the adults tarnish his memory of Valentine and force him to fight with Bonzo, he is set on beating the teachers. Although in the end it could be seen that the adults win since they trick Ender into destroying the buggers, Ender is able to fight back in his own way by finding the hive queen somewhere to live again. Card presents the two sides in a non-traditional manner, by having the adults talk about how they do not know what to do and the children as capable of handling themselves. It is the children who act like history, who save the world from what is seen as the bugger threat and from falling into war when the buggers are gone, and it is a child who seems to be the only one who recognizes the magnitude of the murders he has committed under the adults’ control. The lesson seems to be that ability and intelligence are traits that can come at a variety of ages and sizes.

The problems between the adults and children could be more largely applied to one of intimidation by size. Not only is Ender often picked on for his small size, as are the other boys, but the buggers are compared to ants, creatures that humans often disregard.

**Good versus Evil** - The line between good and evil, as portrayed through Ender and Peter respectively, becomes less and less distinct as the novel goes on. The fantasy game shows Peter’s face instead of Ender’s reflection in the mirror, Ender kills a wasp that just idly lands on the raft, and Peter puts forth a proposal that prevents further war. As Valentine and Ender comment, it is unexpected that in the end Peter has saved lives, while Ender has killed billions. This ultimately seems to suggest that there is some of both good and evil in everyone.

**Games versus Reality** - All is not as it seems. Again, this theme returns to adults as untrustworthy, as what Ender believed to be a simulation, turned out to be a real battle. The battles between armies at Battle School also come into this category, as they become central to the children’s lives. As Dink points out, it can drive them crazy when the pressure is put on them to behave in these situations in a way that they are not in reality. Furthermore, the fantasy game that Ender plays often overlaps into his real life, as when it puts in the photo of Peter or when it affects his mental state through his dreams. The buggers building a landscape imitating the
scenes brings the game and reality together once more, by using the game to make a species alive again, through Ender’s promise when he finds the hive queen.

**Love and Destruction** - To Ender, these two things come at the same time, and he does not see how it could be any other way; the moment he understands an enemy enough to destroy them, he loves them. Because of this, he is able to feel regret over the pain he has caused and, eventually, attempt to make things better between humans and buggers. His job as Speaker for the Dead involves both aspects- when someone dies, he tells their true story, so that others can learn to love them by becoming closer. Since these two ideas are never far from each other in the story, it leaves the reader to believe as Ender does, that love and destruction come together.

**Revenge/Deceit/Manipulation** - The novel warns strongly against such behavior, showing what can happen to those who become caught up in it. Bonzo is the main character who tries to get revenge, and ends up dead. Humans as well are going for a kind of revenge against the buggers, and the result is their destruction of a species, on a misunderstanding. Although Ender does not deceive and manipulate, he is a victim of both, and it has quite a negative effect on his mental health. It is only when the truth is learned, when Ender hears from the hive queen what really happened during those battles, that things are able to move forward. He writes the book The Hive Queen and promises to find her a new place to start her species, beginning the reconciliation between the buggers and the humans.

**RISING ACTION**
The rising action is what takes place at Battle School before Ender is transferred to Command School. This includes his troubles with the fantasy game, the struggle to learn new skills (whether it be as an army, with his Launchies, or coming up with new ideas), and the fight with Bonzo. Back on Earth, Peter and Valentine gain respect and power as Locke and Demosthenes. Together, the events establish the characters and set up events for the battle with the buggers.

**FALLING ACTION**
The falling action begins after Ender is told that the battle was real, that he has killed the buggers, and then he goes to sleep. Peter comes into power on Earth, and rules with little further comment on the matter while Valentine and Ender go to the first colony on a previous bugger world. Ender finds the hive queen and promises to find her a place to live again. The novel ends with Ender and Valentine in search of such a place. The falling action provides closure and sets up events for the sequel.

**POINT OF VIEW**
The novel is told from the third person point of view, which is effective in a number of ways. By switching focus between Ender and Valentine, Card is able to have two plots going on at once, and combine them at the end. It also ensures that Earth remains a setting, and Peter and Valentine, both major influences on Ender, are still central to the story. Having third person perspective at the beginning of the chapters when the (often unnamed) adult characters converse, allows the reader insight into the manipulation of Ender, thus establishing the adults as untrustworthy and Ender as a kind of innocent pawn. Finally, information on the buggers is minimized until the end when they tell their story through Ender, so that the reader is in the similar situation to the characters. We are led to see them as an enemy (for the most part), and only learn more about them until Ender himself does.

**OTHER ELEMENTS**
**Historical Allusions** - This includes the mention of historical figures such as Napoleon, Wellington, Caesar, and Brutus by the adults when they discuss how the Battle School children act, and those mentioned by the children themselves,- Pericles, Demosthenes, Thomas Paine, Ben Franklin, Bismarck, Lenin- which Peter uses to illustrate how he and Valentine can make a difference. Additionally, the events in Russia draw on Cold War
feelings, leading to a polarized world view. These serve to ground the novel, making events seem more probable, by providing reference points familiar to the readers’ world.

**Science Fiction Elements** - *Ender’s Game* is a science fiction novel, as seen in the use of technology (gravity manipulation, primarily), space setting, and bugger enemies. Although no specific date is ever given, the novel is set in the future, removed from the present by two other bugger wars at least. Other ideas featured in the book often associated with science fiction include colonizing other planets, space travel (along with using that for life longevity), a united Earth or at least a global political/military organization, and unlikely heroes.

**QUOTES - QUOTATIONS AND ANALYSIS**
From revised mass market edition July 1994, published by Tom Doherty Associates, LLC

1. “I have to win this now, and for all time, or I’ll fight it every day and it will get worse and worse.” p. 7 (Ender, during his fight with Stilson) Ender’s theory when fighting, which drives him to kill Stilson and Bonzo, as well as to fight brutally against the older boys in the battleroom, the Giant, and the buggers. He will not follow the traditional rules of combat, whether it is by fighting beyond the normal point, striking an opponent in a new way, or going against what he sees as the teachers’ rules for a game.

2. “As a species, we have evolved to survive. And the way we do it is by straining and straining and, at last, every few generations, giving birth to genius. The one who invents the wheel. And light. And flight. The one who builds a city, a nation, an empire…. Human beings are free except when humanity needs them. Maybe humanity needs you. To do something.” p. 35 (Colonel Graff to Ender, as he arrives at Battle School) This seems to pretty much sum up Colonel Graff’s thinking, as to why he himself is involved. It is why he will push Ender to the boy’s limits.

3. “This was supposed to be a game. Not a choice between his own grisly death and an even worse murder. I’m a murderer, even when I play. Peter would be proud of me.” p. 65 (Ender, after killing the Giant in the fantasy game) Although the line is applied to the fantasy game, it will become even more true when he fights the buggers. Ender also thinks that it is a game, and, being overwhelmingly outnumbered, he ends up destroying the buggers completely.

4. “Alai suddenly kissed Ender on the cheek and whispered in his ear, ‘Salaam.’ Then, red-faced, he turned away and walked to his own bed at the back of the barracks.” p. 69 (Alai, to Ender) Peace is also Ender’s wish, as seen when he wonders what it would be like to just live and when he is at the North Carolina house. The moment with Alai is especially significant for Ender as it represents his deepest bond of friendship.

5. “It’s the teachers, they’re the enemy. They get us to fight each other, to hate each other. The game is everything. Win win win. It amounts to nothing.” p. 108 (Dink, to Ender) Although Ender does not believe all that Dink says, the conversation makes Ender question his situation as never before. Eventually, he also comes to see the teachers as the enemy and the game as nothing, which he demonstrates through such actions as his at the battle against two armies after he has just killed Bonzo.

6. “You’re just what the world needs. A twelve-year-old to solve all our problems.’ ‘It’s not my fault I’m twelve right now. And it’s not my fault that right now is when the opportunity is open. Right now is the time when I can shape events. The world is always a democracy in times of flux, and the man with the best voice will win.”’ p. 130 (Valentine and Peter, prior to taking on the Demosthenes and Locke identities) This represents a major theme in the novel, that of children being capable. Peter proves to be right in his abilities to shape events, using his identity on the net as Locke to settle divisions on Earth after the bugger war.
7. “I’m trapped here, Ender thought, trapped at the End of the World with no way out. And he knew at last the sour taste that had come to him, despite all his successes in the Battle School. It was despair.” p. 141 (Ender, playing the fantasy game) This not only hints at Ender’s feelings towards being manipulated and his lack of control over his own life, but also at his fears that, in the end, he will run out of ideas and not be able to win. The feeling is represented again, when he admits it to Bean and Valentine, and when he overlooks his own uneasiness at learning from the buggers in order to come up with new tactics for his own use.

8. “‘I know what you’re thinking, you bastard, you’re thinking that I’m wrong, that Ender’s like Peter. Well maybe I’m like Peter, but Ender isn’t, he isn’t at all, I used to tell him that when he cried, I told him that lots of times, you’re not like Peter, you never like to hurt people, you’re kind and good and not like Peter at all!’” p. 148 (Valentine to Colonel Graff, about Ender and Peter) Although Ender and Peter are presented, especially through Valentine, as polar opposites, often in the novel, they are blurred. For example, Peter says he is afraid of becoming a killer and wants to use his power for good, to unite the world. Ender, on the other hand, kills, even the wasp that lands on the raft.

9. “But I’ll be watching you, more compassionately than you know, and when the time is right you’ll find that I’m your friend, and you are the soldier you want to be.” p. 168 (Ender, thinking about Bean after the first day of practice) As Ender himself notes, his relationship with Bean very closely parallels what happened between Colonel Graff and Ender. In both instances, the tactic works to push the boy to be a good soldier.

10. “In the moment when I truly understand my enemy, understand him well enough to defeat him, then in that very moment I also love him. I think it’s impossible to really understand somebody, what they want, what they believe, and not love them the way they love themselves. And then, in that very moment when I love them—..... I destroy them. I make it impossible for them to ever hurt me again. I grind them and grind them until they don’t exist.’” p. 238 (Ender to Valentine) It is here that Ender reveals what happens to him when he fights. It also foreshadows events with the buggers, as shortly after this conversation, Ender begins trying to learn as much as he can about them, and comes to destroy them completely.

11. “So that’s why you brought me here, thought Ender. With all your hurry, that’s why you took three months, to make me love Earth. Well, it worked. All your tricks worked. Valentine, too; she was another one of your tricks, to make me remember that I’m not going to school for myself. Well, I remember.” p. 243 (Ender, thinking about Colonel Graff as they leave the house in North Carolina) This is important for revealing the motivation behind Ender’s decisions. It also serves to solidify the tie between what had, up to that point, become two separate aspects of the novel—Valentine on Earth, and Ender up at Battle School.

12. “‘So if we can we’ll kill every last one of the buggers, and if they can they’ll kill every last one of us.’ ‘As for me,’ said Ender, ‘I’m in favor of surviving.’” p. 254 (Colonel Graff and Ender, on the war with the buggers) This also foreshadows events with the buggers, hinting at complete destruction if possible. It also provides a very basic, simple explanation for human actions in the war; since the intended result is the destruction of an entire species, it must be seen as necessary for survival.

13. “Real. Not a game. Ender’s mind was too tired to cope with it all. They weren’t just points of light in the air, they were real ships that he had fought with and real ships he had destroyed. And a real world that he had blasted into oblivion. He walked through the crowd, dodging their congratulations, ignoring their hands, their words, their rejoicing. When he got to his own room he stripped off his clothes, climbed into bed, and slept.” p. 297 (Ender, after defeating the buggers) Once again, what had been a game ended up being reality, adults lied, and Ender ended up killing, when he did not mean to do so. It is Ender who recognizes the implications of his actions, who sees what he did as murder.

14. “‘I didn’t want to kill them all. I didn’t want to kill anybody! I’m not a killer! You didn’t want me, you bastards, you wanted Peter, but you made me do it, you tricked me into it!’ He was crying. He was
out of control.” p. 297-8 (Ender to Mazer and Graff) Similarly to the previous quote, Ender is upset over being manipulated into doing something that he did not want to do. He is not malicious, like Peter, and the deaths weigh heavily on him.

15. “I’ll carry you,’ said Ender, ‘I’ll go from world to world until I find a time and a place where you can come awake in safety. And I’ll tell your story to my people, so that perhaps in time, they can forgive you, too. The way that you’ve forgiven me.”’ p. 321 (Ender to the hive queen) This sets up events for the sequel, as well as providing a mental closing to Ender’s trauma over having killed the buggers. It also ends the story on a note of peace and forgiveness, in contrast to the rest of the novel, which has been about war and revenge.

SYMBOLISM / MOTIFS / IMAGERY / SYMBOLS
Monitor - Although it is only with Ender for the first part of the novel, at that point it has come to represent safety and assurance that nothing bad will happen to him. It is constant adult supervision of his life. The removal of the monitor means that he is on his own and that no one will come to his aid, regardless of how serious the danger is to himself or others.

Peter - The squirrel that Peter tortures in the woods is a symbol for Peter himself- his cruelty, combined with a desire to control and manipulate those around him. Peter, as evident from his appearance in the mirror in the fantasy game as well as Ender’s talk with Valentine on the lake in North Carolina, symbolizes to Ender several things. First of all, he is an enemy that Ender cannot defeat. But he is also what Ender fears to become; he consistently compares himself to Peter to warn himself against going too far.

Giant’s game - Ender becomes obsessed with winning the fantasy game, which is designed to develop a meaning between the child and the computer. Ender’s murder of the Giant is one example of how, when faced with limited options, he wants to keep going and will strike out in any way possible. Furthermore, the scenes in the tower room symbolize Ender’s more evil actions; for example, his departure with Valentine from the room to the cheering of the people with Peter’s face, roughly parallels their leaving from Eros, where all the people praised Ender’s destruction of the buggers.

Eros - Previously a bugger world, the place symbolizes for Ender the death of the buggers, as well as the future. Ender had said that he loves his enemy at the time he kills them; Eros is the mythological figure of love and it is while here that he is fighting them. Eros also foreshadows the human spread over bugger worlds, which the hive queen welcomes as she forgives mankind. Also, Ender’s long period of sleep amidst the bugger-built tunnels and rooms parallels the hive queen’s dormant state on what will become Ender’s World.

Stilson - As the first time Ender kills, or even fights for that matter, Stilson is a reoccurring figure in Ender’s mind. To him, Stilson represents the lesson of fighting once, and taking it as far as it must go to make sure he does not need to fight again. Stilson also haunts Ender’s dreams since, even though he was not told, a part of Ender knows that he killed Stilson. Therefore, he is also a symbol of the murders of which Ender was the unwilling committer.

Historical Figures - The references made to historical figures, both by Colonel Graff and by the children themselves, symbolizes the extent of the children’s power and capabilities. It also makes them seem less child-like, but rather with a degree of aloofness and superiority that is associated with those large figures in the past. Locke and Demosthenes, the pen names that Peter and Valentine take on, symbolize Peter and Valentine to a certain extent. Although they start off representing the child’s opposite view, in taking on the identity, each comes to adopt the other perspective themselves. Peter becomes the one to put forth a compromise for peace, reflecting Locke’s reasonable views while Valentine understands Demosthenes’ need to avoid those in power in order to prevent repercussions.
Army Names - Ender’s army, Dragon, is associated with fire, showing a connection between the Salamander and Phoenix armies, both of which he served in previously. The dragon is a symbol for Ender because of its complex nature; it can capture both Ender’s intelligence and violence. Salamanders are known for their ability to regenerate limbs. This could metaphorically be applied in any number of ways. For instance, the army itself lost a toon leader when Ender was promoted into it, but Ender grows in his ability and proves himself valuable. Another way would be that Ender is cut off from his old group, as he was starting to fit into it, and now must grow as a soldier.

Games - In general, the games symbolize reality. Ender must wear a bugger mask when he plays with Peter, foreshadowing how he will come to understand and sympathize with the buggers. At Battle School, the games consume the children’s lives, so much so that they stop acting like children on Earth and assume the role of commanders. The fantasy game reveals much of the inner turmoil in Ender’s life. Finally, the games he plays at Command School turn out to be real, so that the image he sees actually does mean the destruction of the buggers.

IMPORTANT / KEY FACTS SUMMARY
Title: Ender’s Game
Author: Orson Scott Card
Date Published: 1985
Meaning of the Title: The title refers to the war with buggers, during which Ender is commanding the human fleet but thinks it is a simulation. Therefore, it is just a game to him but the adults know the whole time that it is for real.
Setting: North Carolina, Battle School (and the fantasy game), Command School on Eros, Ender’s World
Genre: novel (science fiction)
Protagonist: Andrew “Ender” Wiggin
Antagonist: Although the buggers are seen as the overall antagonist, Ender comes to see the adults as the real enemy. He also must deal with his brother Peter, and has concentrated fights with a few of the other boys-Stilson, Bernard, and Bonzo.
Mood: serious
Point of View: third person, focused on either Ender or Valentine. Also, at the start of chapters, there is a third person perspective, but while listening to often unnamed adult characters converse.
Tense: This story is written in past tense.
Rising Action: events at Battle School, before Ender is transferred to Command School
Exposition: first three chapters in which the reader is introduced to the Wiggin children and Colonel Graff, Ender is presented in contrast to Peter, and Ender decides to go to Battle School
Climax: the battle with the buggers, Ender’s use of Dr. Device on the bugger home planet, and his being told that the battles have been real all along
Outcome: Peter comes into power on Earth, Valentine and Ender go to the first colony on a previous bugger world, Ender finds the hive queen and promises to find her a place to live again, Ender and Valentine set out in search of a place
Major Themes: children (capable) versus adults (untrustworthy), the line between good and evil, games versus reality
Minor Themes: murder and redemption/ love and destruction/ love and hate, winning at all costs, being different, revenge/ deceit/ manipulation, taking on an identity, struggle for survival/ understanding, influence of memories on what a person is

VOCABULARY
malleable: likely to give in to pressure from others
maladroit: awkward, lacking skill
salaam: peace
toon: a small military unit
hegemony: leadership over others
I.F.: International Fleet

**STUDY QUESTIONS - MULTIPLE CHOICE QUIZ**

1. What is identified as Ender’s weakness?
   a. too cruel
   b. cannot bring himself to kill
   c. too malleable
   d. spiders

2. What mask does Peter make Ender wear when they are playing?
   a. astronaut
   b. one of Peter
   c. one of Stilson
   d. bugger

3. Who tells Ender that he/she will love him forever, as he leaves for Battle School?
   a. Mother
   b. Father
   c. Valentine
   d. Peter

4. How does Colonel Graff isolate Ender during the Launch?
   a. he singles Ender out as the best one
   b. he punishes Ender for fighting with Bernard
   c. he makes Ender cry
   d. he is only friendly to Ender

5. How does Ender break Bernard’s control over the group?
   a. he sends a message making fun of him
   b. he fights Bernard and wins
   c. he asks Shen to form an alliance with him
   d. he spreads rumors about Bernard

6. Ender gets to Fairyland by
   a. choosing the right liquid
   b. digging out the Giant’s eyes
   c. bribing the Giant
   d. making the Giant drink the liquid and die

7. Ender learns skills in all these ways BUT
   a. practicing with Salamander Army
   b. practicing with his old Launchies
   c. practicing with Petra
   d. watching Bonzo, and thinking of ways to defeat him

8. What does Ender see in the mirror while playing the fantasy game?
   a. snakes
   b. himself killing Stilson
c. Valentine
d. Peter

9. Father likes to read this column in the paper
   a. Aristotle
   b. Locke
   c. Demosthenes
   d. I.F. News

10. Dragon Army is at a disadvantage in all these ways EXCEPT
    a. name is associated with losing
    b. all the other commanders are used to using the hook to manipulate gravity
    c. no trades allowed
    d. none of the soldiers are experienced

11. From watching the bugger videos, Ender learns all these things EXCEPT
    a. that human ships responded slowly, while the buggers were unified
    b. how to act random, while creating confusion
    c. using tricks to lure ships into traps
    d. the details of Mazer Rackham’s victory

12. Ender uses this strategy to win against two armies
    a. performing victory ceremony at the gate
    b. waits until they have surrounded Dragon Army’s entrance gate and then shoots them down
    c. flexible toons, each operating independently
    d. divide and conquer

13. Valentine tells Ender this is the reason he must return to training
    a. he now loves Earth, since spending time at the lake, and he would not be able to stand by while it was destroyed
    b. the I.F. will force him to, as he was only allowed to be born in the first place so that he could undergo training
    c. she is afraid Peter will find a way to use him for Peter’s own plans of world domination if Ender returns home
    d. she protected him from Peter when he was younger and now she is scared for herself against the buggers

14. Ender does this to end the war with the buggers
    a. promises peace
    b. captures the Queen and holds her hostage
    c. he surrenders
    d. uses the Little Doctor on the planet

15. Where is the hive queen hidden?
    a. on a bugger ship that accidentally crashed on the colony
    b. in a hole in one of the old bugger tunnels on Eros
    c. behind the mirror in the reconstructed fantasy game landscape
    d. in the house in North Carolina where Ender stayed

16. Ender does all these things EXCEPT
    a. promise to find the hive queen a place to live
b. return to Earth  
c. become a Speaker for the Dead, including one for Peter  
d. become governor of the first colony to an old bugger world

Answer Key  
1.) c  2.) d  3.) c  4.) a  5.) a  6.) b  7.) a  8.) d  9.) c  10.) b  11.) d  12.) a  13.) d  14.) d  15.) c  16.) b

ESSAY TOPIC IDEAS / BOOK REPORT TOPICS  
1. What effect does the setting have on the mood of the novel? How is it significant that so much of the story takes place off of Earth?  
2. Compare and contrast the ways in which the children at Battle School act like children on Earth. To what extent does the novel correctly reflect the behavior and thoughts of children?  
3. How did Card draw on actual historical events in the novel and what is the overall effect of having these in the novel?  
4. In what ways is *Ender’s Game* similar to other science fiction? In what ways is it different?  
5. Is isolation important for creativity and/or leadership? Could Ender have become as good as he was through different tactics?  
6. Use either Locke’s or Demosthenes’ reasoning to argue in favor or against one of the major topics in the book (what should be done about the political division on Earth, population restriction laws, etc).  
7. Compare and contrast Ender and Peter. Is there as much a difference between them as Valentine insists there is?  
8. What is the role of the games (the video games, the fantasy game, the battles) in Battle School?  
9. Discuss how the traditional rites accompanying a death in a particular religion are similar or different to those of *Speaker for the Dead*.  
10. How is point of view in the novel used to control the reader’s reaction to events? How would Ender, the buggers, or other characters be seen from another’s perspective?

COMMENT ON THE STUDY OF LITERATURE  
The study of literature is not like the study of math or science, or even history. While those disciplines are based largely upon fact, the study of literature is based upon interpretation and analysis. There are no clear-cut answers in literature, outside of the factual information about an author's life and the basic information about setting and characterization in a piece of literature. The rest is a highly subjective reading of what an author has written; each person brings a different set of values and a different background to the reading. As a result, not two people see the piece of literature in exactly the same light, and few critics agree on everything about a book or an author.

In this study guide, we have tried to give an objective literary analysis based upon the information actually found in the novel, book, or play. In the end, however, it is an individual interpretation, but one that we feel can be readily supported by the information that is presented in the guide. In your course of literature study, you or your professor/teacher may come up with a different interpretation of the mood or the theme or the conflict. Your interpretation, if it can be logically supported with information contained within the piece of literature, is just as correct as ours. So is the interpretation of your teacher or professor.

Literature is simply not a black or white situation; instead, there are many gray areas that are open to varying analyses. Your task is to come up with your own analysis that you can logically defend. Hopefully, this study guide will help you to accomplish that goal.

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