

Name:

## Day One

# Serving Their Country, Losing Their Children

### Part 1: Silent read

→ Should the law protect parents serving overseas? Read silently.

Today, many U.S. soldiers are parents. The U.S. Army creed says, “I will always place the mission first.” Some soldiers have found that carrying out their mission can lead to losing a child.

Tanya is a member of the National Guard. While her son was young, her Guard postings were in the U.S. But when he was 11, Tanya got new orders: she was being sent to Iraq. While she was gone, her ex-husband went to court. He wanted custody of their son. When Tanya came home, the boy she had raised was gone. She told her story on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. “It was like someone ripping my heart out,” she said.

Tanya tried to show the judge that she was a good mother. She tried in vain. The judge said that she *was* a good mother. But because she could still be called overseas, the judge gave custody to the father.

Vanessa is another military mom. When Vanessa’s son was 14, she was sent to serve in Afghanistan. One day, she got chilling news. She told *CBS News*, “I had gotten an email from my son’s father that says, ‘You need to get a lawyer. I’m not sending your son back to you.’”

State law sets rules about custody. Most states do not protect soldiers in custody battles. Some soldiers now have a goal: they want a federal law that protects soldiers serving overseas. They say serving your country should not mean losing your child.

Sources: “Female soldiers’ custody battles,” *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, October 13, 2010.

“Many parents fight for custody at home,” *CBS News*, August 31, 2009.



# Day One

// one minute

## Serving Their Country, Losing Their Children

### Part 2: First timed read

WPM \_\_\_\_\_

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### Part 3: Comprehension and discussion

Why did Tanya lose custody of her son?

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Who sets rules about custody?

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## Day One

# Serving Their Country, Losing Their Children

### Part 4: Phrase-cued reading

- Read the passage **out loud** in phrases to your partner.
- Pause at each / mark for a phrase.
- Also pause at each // mark that shows the end of a sentence.

Today, / many U.S. soldiers are parents. // The U.S. Army creed says, / “I will always place the mission first.” // Some soldiers have found / that carrying out their mission / can lead to losing a child. //

Tanya is a member of the National Guard. // While her son was young, / her Guard postings were in the U.S. // But when he was 11, / Tanya got new orders: / she was being sent to Iraq. // While she was gone, / her ex-husband went to court. // He wanted custody of their son. // When Tanya came home, / the boy she had raised was gone. // She told her story on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*. // “It was like someone ripping my heart out,” / she said. //

Tanya tried to show the judge / that she was a good mother. // She tried in vain. // The judge said that she was a good mother. // But because she could still be called overseas, / the judge gave custody to the father. //

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State law sets rules about custody. // Most states do not protect soldiers / in custody battles. // Some soldiers now have a goal: / they want a federal law / that protects soldiers serving overseas. // They say serving your country / should not mean losing your child. //

I read the passage in phrases out loud to my partner.