

LESSON
1

WHAT ARE
WAR AND **CONFLICT?**



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OBJECTIVES

- 1 Think about what 'conflict', 'peace' and 'war' mean and what an absence of peace means
- 2 Examine the notion that conflict inside and between countries can be measured
- 3 Learn about what war can mean for children and how they might be particularly vulnerable

Young people also get to work together in groups, use their critical thinking skills, think about ethical or philosophical questions, and build empathy with children affected by war by imagining how their lives are affected by it.



RESOURCES



In the classroom

- ➔ Whiteboard/large paper
- ➔ 'World Conflict' worksheet copied. One per pair
- ➔ *Optional* Global Peace Index 'Highlights' printed out one per pair from the website – visionofhumanity.org and click on the 'Report and Highlights' button or web search for Vision of Humanity/Global Peace Index
- ➔ *Optional* Old magazines, newspapers etc. plus scissors and glue if creating vision boards
- ➔ *Optional* 'Testimonies' worksheet copied for each learner



On screen

- ➔ Global Peace – visionofhumanity.org or web search for Vision of Humanity/Global Peace Index
- ➔ 'Syrian Children's stories, told by London's ones' on War Child Channel on YouTube youtube.co.uk – then search term War Child UK
- ➔ *Optional* Global Peace Index 'Highlights' from the website – visionofhumanity.org and click on the 'Report and Highlights' button or web search for Vision of Humanity/Global Peace Index



KEY TERMS AND QUESTIONS

What are 'war' and 'conflict'?

WAR

RIGHTS CONFLICT

What is 'peace'?

How might war and conflict affect children?

PEACE

What conflicts am I aware of?

What patterns exist around conflict today?

SECURITY

How do we measure war and conflict?

Are most wars across borders or inside them?

CIVIL WAR

WAR CHILD

War Child looks forward to a world in which the lives of children are no longer torn apart by war

Our mission is to support and improve the protection and care of children and young people who live with a combination of insecurity, poverty and exclusion in some of the worst conflict-affected places around the world.

We're providing life-changing support to the most vulnerable children whose families, communities and schools have been torn apart by war.

We work in areas devastated by armed conflict, helping children suffering some of the worst effects of violence. This includes child soldiers, sexual violence, abduction and children living and working on the streets. We are committed to standing by children and families long enough to provide them the best possible assistance in overcoming their experiences. This means we respond to emergencies but stay long after the TV cameras have gone home.

We aim to deliver **three** life saving interventions



We work in **three** ways



Direct delivery of projects to support children (often through local partner organisations), such as providing trauma counselling



Investment in local structures and communities that can have a long-term impact, such as setting up child helplines within the local government



Influencing decision-makers and those with a responsibility to protect children by doing advocacy to change attitudes, behaviour and policies. For example, a new law could be passed by the government to make it illegal for the army to recruit children under the age of 18



Protection

of children, their families and their communities before, during and after a crisis



Education

getting children into school or informal learning in situations where war means they're missing out on an education



Livelihoods

helping young people or their families to learn the vocational skills they need to earn a sustainable living that is safe (e.g. getting children off the streets)



ACTIVITIES



Starter game

5 – 10
minutes

In two teams, learners queue up at two sides of the board/two large pieces of paper. Put 'conflict' at the top of each piece of paper. Learners then have a minute to take turns writing up words that they associate with conflict – followed by another two rounds of the game using the words 'war' and 'peace'.

Which team got the highest number of words? Which team wrote the most interesting words? You could pick out some and ask learners why they wrote them.



Main activity

30 – 40
minutes

Group creative 15 – 20 minutes

Using the resultant six lists, each group of five takes one piece and works together to try and come up with a definition – they can use words, draw pictures, create a freeze frame/performance, or a vision board for their word. They then take turns sharing their definition with the rest of the class e.g. 'What conflict means to us'.

Follow up with some reflection questions for the whole class.

- ➔ What is the main difference between 'war' and 'conflict'? Is it about scale, numbers of people involved or affected, about territory? Is it about what happens inside a state versus what happens between states? Is it the level of organisation?
- ➔ We know war is a bad thing, but is conflict always a 'bad' thing?
- ➔ Is peace simply the absence of conflict or is there more to it?
- ➔ How does the class think war and conflict affect children?

World conflict pair work 15 – 20 minutes

Now that young people have thought about what war, peace and conflict mean, ask them where they think there is conflict at the moment and make a list on the board or on a large piece of paper. They then look at the 'Global Peace Index' on the 'Vision of Humanity' website and compare their own thoughts with the Index.

Looking at the interactive, and/or at a printed copy of the highlights, they answer some key questions in pairs on the 'World Conflict' worksheet.

5 – 10
minutes

Plenary

Having thought about war/conflict and what they mean for people through the 'Global Index', time to imagine that they live in one of the least peaceful places in the world – what do they think the main impacts of that conflict would be on them as young people? Do they think they would be more or less at risk than adults if they lived in a place where there was conflict going on?

Finish by watching 'Syrian Children's stories, told by London's ones' on War Child's YouTube Channel. Think about the key question:

What surprised young people about what their peers in Syria were saying about conflict?

Alternatively, learners could take it in turns to read the *Testimonies worksheet* and answer the question above.



Further resources

If there's time you could share different definitions and thoughts on peace, war and conflict in groups or with the whole class, for instance:

TED: 'Jody Williams: A realistic vision for world peace' (10 minute TED talk) ted.com (and search for Jody Williams)

Defining conflicts: 'What makes it a war? The Economist' (short written article) economist.com (and search for What makes it a war?)

BBC Ethics: War (website section to browse) bbc.co.uk/ethics/war



Further learning

Learners use links above or do further research to find out what other sources (journalists, films online, family, friends) think war, peace or conflict are. Then write a paragraph reflecting on the question 'Do different people have different perceptions of what war, conflict or peace mean to them? If so, why?'



Further action

Learners work in groups/individually to write a film script based on the Syrian Children film they watched. They could write this using their knowledge about a conflict they've heard a bit about in the news. What do they imagine children are saying there?

Record the film at the beginning of the next lesson and show in assembly along with the War Child UK film to raise awareness of how war can affect children's lives.

Why not follow this up with raising money in school to help children affected by war?

Check out War Child's current campaigns, share your voice and get involved at warchild.org.uk/campaigns



WORLD CONFLICT

Using the *Vision of Humanity Global Peace Index*, search for answers to the following...

Which are the most and least peaceful countries in the world?

Most peaceful

Least peaceful

Which parts of the world are most affected by conflict?

Which areas of the world is the most peaceful?

The Global Peace Index measures peace using three themes. What are they?

1

2

3

Is the world getting more or less peaceful over time?

What does the Index tell us about refugees?

Have any countries gone down sharply in the Index during the last year? If so, what do they all have in common?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Write something down that surprised you about the Index.

The Global Peace Index uses 22 'indicators'. Do you think some are more important than others? Why?

Which indicators would you use to find out where in the world children might be most affected by conflict?

TESTIMONIES

All of these testimonies come from children who have been affected by the war in Syria

“ I was playing with friends and a plane dropped a bomb, so everyone in the village told us to run away... we ran to our house and they bombed it. I fell unconscious... there were seven children and one old lady killed inside the house. ”



A 13-year-old boy

“ They bombed and demolished my school... they don't want my generation to be studying. ”



A 13-year-old girl

“ My house was demolished. I don't have a home anymore. They stole my bike and they should bring it back to me in Jordan. ”



A five-year-old boy

“ I'm afraid of rockets and bullets. ”



A five-year-old boy

“ They won't let me into the Madrassa [school] because my face is yellow because I have no food. They think because I am yellow that I have a disease. One boy inside the school said Syrian children were diseased so they won't play with us or let us into the school. One Jordanian girl wouldn't sit next to my sister because they think she is ill. I don't leave the house. ”



A nine-year-old girl