



WHY WAGE WAR?

An Interaction Unit Exploring the Ethics of War and Peace

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W H Y W A G E W A R ?

As part of the nationwide movement for high standards in History, the National Center for History in Schools has not only set down what students should learn, but has also stated that “real historical understanding requires students to engage in historical thinking.” WHY WAGE WAR? is a standards-based program addressing National History Thinking Skills, Social Studies, and English Language Arts Standards. WHY WAGE WAR? provides many opportunities for performance assessment. Students investigate and discuss four different views of war embodied in the positions of the Pacifist, the Political Realist, the Just War Advocate, and the Holy War Advocate. In a simulated talk show, students role-play panelists or audience questioners to demonstrate their understanding of each position. To further demonstrate history thinking skills, students analyze a case study of a current or historic conflict and recommend the best action for the United States to adopt. Applied Learning Standards are addressed throughout.

**National Standards for History
Standards in Historical Thinking**

Standard 1: Chronological Thinking

The student is able to:

- Identify temporal structure of a historical narrative or story.

Standard 2: Historical Comprehension

The student is able to:

- Reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage by identifying who was involved, what happened, where it happened, what events led to the developments, and what consequences or outcomes followed.
- Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations.
- Identify the central question(s) the historical narrative addresses and the purpose, perspective, or point of view from which it has been constructed.
- Read historical narratives imaginatively.
- Draw upon visual, literary, and musical sources including photographs, paintings, and cartoons to clarify, illustrate, or elaborate upon information presented in the historical narrative.

Standard 3: Historical Analysis and Interpretation

The student is able to:

- Compare and contrast differing sets of ideas, values, personalities, behaviors, and institutions by identifying likenesses and differences.
- Consider multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes, and fears.
- Analyze cause-and-effect relationships and multiple causation, including the importance of the individual, the influence of ideas, and the role of chance.
- Distinguish between unsupported expressions of opinion and informed hypotheses grounded in historical evidence.

STANDARDS

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W H Y W A G E W A R ?

STANDARDS

- Compare competing historical narratives.
- Challenge arguments of historical inevitability by formulating examples of historical contingency of how different choices could have led to different consequences.
- Hold interpretations of history as tentative, subject to change as new information is uncovered, new voices heard, and new interpretations broached.
- Hypothesize the influence of the past, including both the limitations and the opportunities made possible by past decisions.

Standard 4: Historical Research

The student is able to:

- Obtain historical data from a variety of sources.
- Support interpretations with historical evidence in order to construct reasoned arguments rather than facile opinions.

Standard 5: Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making

The student is able to:

- Identify issues and problems in the past and analyze the interests, values, perspectives, and points of view of those involved in the situation.
- Formulate a position or course of action on an issue.
- Evaluate the implementation of a decision by analyzing the interests it served; estimating the position, power, and priority of each player involved; assessing the ethical dimensions of the decision; and evaluating its costs and benefits from a variety of perspectives.

NCSS Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

Strand 6: Power, Authority & Governance

The learner can:

- Analyze and explain ideas and mechanisms to meet needs and wants of citizens, regulate territory, manage conflict, establish order and security, and balance competing conceptions of a just society.
- Compare and analyze the ways nations and organizations respond to conflicts between forces of unity and forces of diversity.
- Analyze and evaluate conditions, actions, and motivations that contribute to conflict and cooperation within and among nations.

Strand 9: Global Connections

The learner can:

- Explain conditions and motivations that contribute to conflict, cooperation, and interdependence among groups, societies, and nations.
- Analyze the relationships and tensions between national sovereignty and global interests, explain the origins and interpret the continuing influence of key ideals of the democratic republican form of government, such as individual human dignity, liberty, justice, equality, and the rule of law.

W H Y W A G E W A R ?

NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts

Standard 3: Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features.

Standard 4: Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.

Standard 5: Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

Standard 6: Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions, media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print text.

Standard 8: Students use a variety of technological and informational resources to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Standard 11: Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

Standard 12: Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes.

California Applied Learning Standards

Standard 6: Students will understand how to apply communication skills and techniques. Students will demonstrate ability to communicate orally and in writing.

Standard 8: Students will understand the importance of teamwork. Students will work on teams to achieve project objectives.

STANDARDS

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STUDENT
COGNITION

W H Y W A G E W A R ?

Our students are coming of age in a world where issues of war and peace are discussed and debated everywhere. Despite this, these issues seem alien and removed to young people. Teens are often not included in the conversation. Now, in just five–10 hours, **WHY WAGE WAR?** makes these issues exciting and accessible to your students. In this interaction unit, students research one of four ethical theories of war and peace in cooperative groups and then participate in a talk show discussing these controversial issues. Through their research and discussion, students reflect on their own views of right and wrong with regard to war and peace and apply their perspectives to a specific case in the past or present.

Specifically, your students will gain the following:

Knowledge

- Pacifism, Just War, Political Realism, and Holy War Theories
- Costs and benefits of war
- Significance and meaningfulness of war
- Historical interpretation of war
- Identification of personal views of right and wrong

Skills

- Reading to understand information
- Working cooperatively with others
- Following written and oral directions
- Making value judgments on social/ethical issues
- Posing relevant questions
- Using reading, speaking, drama, and debate skills
- Applying ethical theories to a case study
- Using proper bibliographic citation
- Articulating the beliefs of another in spite of personal opinions

Attitudes

- Valuing teamwork
- Appreciating the importance of communication
- Feeling responsible to the group as a whole
- Understanding the motivation of differing theories/perspectives
- Appreciating conflicting ideas and attitudes held by different individuals

PURPOSE

OVERVIEW

W H Y W A G E W A R ?

OVERVIEW

Student Participation

Students conduct research, then role-play either the individual advocating their theory or audience members during the talk show. A group case study then directs student reflection and leads to deeper understanding, application, and analysis.

Four Ethical Theories

The class is divided into four groups of students. Each group reads the background information and researches one of four ethical theories of war and peace: Pacifism, Just War, Political Realism, Holy War. Through their reading and research these groups become “experts” on their respective ethical position. One member of the group is chosen to role-play the “guest” advocating their ethical position during the talk show. The other group members participate as part of an interactive audience.

Talk Show

A student plays the role of host, while the teacher is the show’s producer. Four guests, one from each of the four ethical theories, participate in an interactive talk show format. The audience members are responsible for developing relevant questions to pose to the other “guests,” posters which reflect their ethical position, and a “public service announcement” advocating their position. Audience members act out the public service announcement during public service announcement breaks. Following the talk show, students debrief the controversial issues discussed.

Case Study

An essential part of this unit, the case study allows students to apply the knowledge they have gained thus far. A case study is provided on the Bosnia conflict; however, any conflict of your choosing works well. Students begin by examining the presented case within their “expert” groups. Together, they develop a presentation that articulates their recommended course of action to the President of the United States. Jigsaw groups are formed, each of which includes one student from each of the four ethical theories. Groups discuss the various ethical theories related to the case. Following the discussion, each student writes a letter to the President reflecting on his/her own personal thoughts/beliefs related to the case and the synthesized learning from this unit.

Special Needs Students

As in all Interact units, WHY WAGE WAR? provides differentiated instruction through its various learning opportunities. Students learn and experience the knowledge, skills, and attitudes through all domains of language (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). Adjust the level of difficulty as best fits your students. Assist special needs students in selecting activities/roles that utilize their strengths and allow them to succeed. Work together with your itinerant teachers to coordinate instruction.