

ProQuest Standards-Based Learning Activity

International Conflicts and Resolution—Teacher Guide

APPROPRIATE FOR: Social Studies, Grades 9-12

TIMELINE: Three class periods

GEORGIA SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS ADDRESSED THROUGH THIS LESSON

SSWH21 The student will analyze globalization in the contemporary world

a. describe the cultural and intellectual integration of countries into the world economy through the development of television, satellites, and computers

b. analyze global economic and political connections to include multinational corporations, United Nations, OPEC, and the World Trade Organization

LEARNING EXPECTATIONS/OBJECTIVES

- Students will use SIRS Knowledge Source to learn about a current international conflict and the history of its causes.
- Students will take effective notes on their research.
- Students will recognize the difference between opinion and news articles.
- Students will prepare a group oral presentation from the perspective of one party to the conflict.
- Students will learn and employ mediation methods to propose a solution to the conflict.

MATERIALS AND TOOLS REQUIRED

- Pens and paper for note taking, presentation preparation, etc.
- Computer with Internet access
- Chalkboard and chalk or dry erase boards and markers

ACTIVITY PROCESS: DIRECTIONS TO THE TEACHER

Description of Activity

On the first day, groups of students will use SIRS Knowledge Source to research and take notes on international conflicts. On the second day, each group will be divided in two, representing the conflict's two parties. These new split sub-groups will be responsible for researching their group's particular history and grievances in more detail as well as preparing an oral presentation on their position. On the third day, students will study and employ basic mediation skills. Each of the groups will present the perspectives of the sub-groups to another group who will mediate between the two parties.

Outline of Procedures -- Day One

Before class: Identify at least four international conflicts that students may be interested in learning more about. One way to brainstorm a few such topics is to enter "conflict" or "war" in the SIRS Knowledge Source search engine. Limit your search under the "search by" menu to dates in the "last month". Alternately, you might have a general topic in mind already and desire to find more specific sub-topics for your students. Some examples of general topics might include: Israel and Palestine, Russia and Chechnya, civil war in Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, or the Ivory Coast.

In class: Create four groups of students, and then allow groups to select from among the international conflicts you have identified. If groups suggest a conflict beyond your pre-class brainstorm, you may wish to allow them to pursue their interests.

Depending on the number of computers available, students will work in groups or else individually on behalf of their group. Students will begin by using SIRS Knowledge Source to search for more detailed information about the conflict they have chosen. Students should try a variety of simple search strings, e.g., Israel, Palestine, Israel conflict, etc., to receive the best results on either a broad or more specific topic. Searches may be made more relevant by using the “choose date” menu to limit results to the past month or past three months.

By browsing the list of articles returned, students should select the five articles most relevant to their conflict and add them to “My List” by clicking the plus sign located to the right of the article title. When they have found enough articles, the selected articles may be retrieved by clicking on the “My List” button at the top of the search page. (Remember to have students print or email their My List selections prior to ending their SIRS Knowledge Source sessions.)

Students should read and take notes, including appropriate bibliographic information, on each article. This site will provide tips on note taking <http://www.academictips.org/acad/literature/notetaking.html>. Their notes should focus on identifying what is at issue in the conflict, what the stated goals of the two parties are and what obstacles lie in the path of resolution. Students should also briefly describe the specific historical events mentioned in the articles that have most significantly framed the conflict. For opinion articles, students should also identify the position of the speaker and his/her main arguments.

In the last 15 minutes of class, have groups reconvene to share what they have learned about their conflict. Groups should focus on identifying the issues at stake, the stated goals of the two parties and obstacles that lie in the path to resolution.

Outline of Procedures -- Day Two

Today each group (e.g., the Israel conflict group) will be split into two sub-groups representing the two parties to the conflict each group researched the day before (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians).

First the members of each sub-group, working collectively or individually, should use SIRS Knowledge Source to gain a greater historical perspective on their party’s grievances and aspirations. Again, students should experiment with a variety of search strings to return the widest results (e.g., Palestine, Palestinian, Israel). For this search, students should try limiting their search to “books” by checking the appropriate box in the “source” menu. Students should locate, read and take notes on the two articles most relevant to their party and conflict.

In the second half of the class, sub-groups (e.g., Palestinians or Israelis) should meet to prepare and practice their oral presentation for the following day. The presentation should be approximately three minutes long and should present the party’s perspective on the conflict. Each presentation should include:

- An overview of the conflict
- A statement of the desired aims of their party
- A statement of any grievances against the other party to the conflict
- Specific examples from recent events or history that strengthen their case

Encourage students to use the chalkboard or a dry erase board to add a visual element to their presentation.

Outline of Procedures -- Day Three

Begin the day by having students access the article, “MEDIATION: AN OVERVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION” from SIRS Knowledge Source:

<http://sks.sirs.com/cgi-bin/hst-article-display?id=SSKSBASE-0-8846&artno=0000112655&type=ART&shfilter=U&key=&res=Y&ren=Y&gov=Y&lnk=Y&ic=N>

In this article students will learn the basics of mediation. They will also see an example of how mediation can work in practice. Briefly discuss the article with the class, helping them to identify the four steps of mediation:

1. Set the ground rules
2. Review the facts
3. Think about causes
4. Make choices

Remind students that a successful mediator does not propose solutions, but encourages parties in conflict to reach solutions together. This is a critical and difficult concept, and is worthy of some probing; consider asking how a mediator might resist the urge to offer a really good solution if they think of one, and why they should do so. As a class, review the ground rules: only one person may speak at a time; respect the mediator; listen sincerely to the concerns of the other party.

Here's a suggested progression:

1. When the discussion is complete, pair each group with another group (e.g., the Israel/Palestine group with the Chechnya/Russia group). While each of the subgroups (e.g., Israel or Palestine) is making their oral presentation about their conflict, both the members of the opposition group (e.g., the Chechnya/Russia group) and the mediating group should be listening, taking notes, and preparing for their roles as mediators.
2. After both sub-groups have presented, one member of the non-presenting group (e.g., Chechnya/Russia) should be selected to begin mediation. Because the ground rules were established as a class, a brief review is all that is needed. The first mediator may then proceed by reviewing the facts as presented by the two sides. The two parties (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians) may comment here only to clarify informational points.
3. A second mediator should then initiate the discussion between the two parties (Israelis and Palestinians) about the causes of the conflict. Other members of the mediating group (Russia/Chechnya) may raise their hands and ask constructive questions of the two parties.
4. After causes have been identified, a third mediator should step in to help the two parties make choices: What solutions can be reached? What can each of the parties offer to smooth the way to resolution? What changes need to be made before the conflict can be resolved? If a complete resolution cannot be achieved, are there incremental steps that can nevertheless be taken?

After students have finished the first mediation, the groups should switch roles, with the mediators (Russia/Chechnya) making their presentations and the presenters (Israel/Palestine) becoming mediators.

If there is time, discuss the mediation process with your class. How successful was it? How realistic was it? What did students learn about mediation and international conflict?

ASSESSMENT

Students should be assessed based on the following criteria:

Research

- Used SIRS Knowledge Source to find relevant information about their topic
- Took accurate and complete notes, including bibliographic information

Presentation

- Participated in group work to identify important elements of conflict and party history
- Created a well organized, informative presentation

Mediation

- Took accurate, complete notes on others' presentations
- Observed rules of mediation
- As mediator, helped lead parties to resolution
- As party to conflict, cooperated with mediator and sincerely sought resolution to problem

Optional Enrichment Activities

SIRS Knowledge Source provides Leading Issues which is an opportunity to follow up research on genetic diseases with a mini-debate on controversial issues that relate to genetic diseases:

- Ethnic Conflicts
- Global Warming
- Human rights
- Islamic fundamentalism
- Immigration
- Narcotics, Control of
- Nuclear weapons
- Terrorism
- Treatment of prisoners
- Weapons of mass destruction

SIRS has created unique models that correlate mini-debates with the format of Leading Issues to provide teachers and students with support for extending these enriching and engaging learning activities.

1. Click the Educators' Resources link at the top of the Search page
2. Scroll down and click the following links to open and print the guides
3. Guide to Creating a Debate Outline - Student
4. Guide to Creating a Debate Outline - Teacher

International Conflict and Mediation

A Social Studies Lesson

Anyone who watches the news will be aware of a very real pattern: around the world, on nearly every continent, between all manner of peoples, there are conflicts. These can be civil wars, guerrilla campaigns or peaceful protests, but in each case there are two or more parties engaged in serious -- and often deadly -- opposition. In this lesson you will research one international conflict, then take on the role of one of the parties to the conflict, searching through mediation for a reasonable solution to your dispute.

DURING THIS ACTIVITY...

- Use SIRS Knowledge Source to learn about a current international conflict and the history of its circumstances.
- Take effective notes as you research.
- Recognize the difference between opinion and news articles.
- Prepare an oral presentation from the perspective of one party to your conflict.
- Learn and employ mediation methods to create a proposed solution to your conflict.

Day One

Today you will research your conflict in small groups using SIRS Knowledge Source. You can choose from the list of provided topics.

1. When searching, be sure to try a variety of simple search strings, e.g., "Israel", "Palestine", "Israel conflict", etc., to receive the best results. Your searches will be most up-to-date if you use the "choose date" menu to limit results to the past month or past three months. (Note that being up-to-date can be of critical importance for one conflict but may overlook key events for certain other conflicts.)

2. By browsing the list of articles returned, you should select the five articles most relevant to your conflict and add them to "My List" by clicking the plus sign located to the right of the article title. When you have finished selecting your articles, the list may be retrieved by clicking on the "My List" button at the top of the search page. Before closing out of SIRS Knowledge Source, make sure to print or email your My List selections.

3. During your research, it's important that you take accurate notes, including appropriate bibliographic information, on each article. For a how-to on bibliographic notes, see: <http://library.bigchalk.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOPrimo.woa/wa/getDoc?docid=69359085&product=BCLib>

Your notes should focus on identifying what is at issue in the conflict, what the stated goals of the two parties are and what obstacles lie in the path of resolution. You should also briefly describe the specific historical events mentioned in the article.

When you are reading an opinion article, make sure to identify the position of the speaker and his/her main arguments. Remember, opinion articles differ from news articles in that their purpose is to advance an argument rather than presenting an unbiased account of the facts.

4. In the last 15 minutes of class you will meet with your group to share what you have learned about you conflict. With your group, focus on identifying the issues at stake, the stated goals of the two parties, and obstacles that lie in the path to resolution.

Day Two

Today your group (e.g., Israel/Palestine) will be split into two sub-groups representing the two parties to the conflict your group researched the day before (e.g., Israelis on the one hand, Palestinians on the other).

5. First the members of each sub-group, working collectively or individually, should use SIRS Knowledge Source to gain a greater historical perspective on your side's grievances and aspirations. Remember to experiment with a variety of search strings to return the widest results (e.g., Palestine, Israel, Palestinian, PLO). For this search, you will need to limit your search to "books" by checking the appropriate box in the "source" menu. You will need to locate, read, and take notes on the two articles most relevant to your party and conflict.

- What are the historical roots of your conflict?
- What is the history of your people?
- Why is this conflict so important to your people?

6. In the second half of the class, you will meet with your sub-groups (e.g., Israelis or Palestinians) to prepare an oral presentation for tomorrow. The presentation should be approximately three minutes long and should present your party's perspective on the conflict. Each presentation should include:

- An overview of the conflict
- A statement of the desired aims of your party (e.g., Palestinians)
- A statement of any grievances against the other party (e.g., Israelis)
- Specific examples from recent events or history that strengthen your case

Think about using the chalkboard or a dry erase board to add a visual element to your presentation.

Day Three

7. You'll start today by reading the article, "Let's Mediate" from the SIRS Knowledge Source. Use the following address:

<http://library.bigchalk.com/cgi-bin/WebObjects/WOPrimo.woa/wa/getDoc?docid=69359085&product=BCLib>

Remember, the four steps of mediation are:

- 1) Set the ground rules
- 2) Review the facts
- 3) Think about causes
- 4) Make choices

A successful mediator does not propose solutions, but encourages parties in conflict to reach solutions together.

8. Once you have finished discussing mediation as a class, your group (e.g., Israel/Palestine) will be paired with another group (e.g., Russia/Chechnya). When your subgroup (e.g., Israelis) is not presenting, you should be listening, taking notes, and preparing for your roles as mediators.

9. After both sub-groups (e.g., Israelis and Palestinians) have presented, one member of the other group (e.g., Russia/Chechnya) will be selected to begin mediation. Because the ground rules were established as a class, a brief review is all that is needed. The first mediator may then proceed by reviewing the facts as presented by the two sides. The two parties (Israelis and Palestinians) may comment here only to clarify informational points.

A second mediator should then initiate the discussion between the two parties (Israelis and Palestinians) about the causes of the conflict. Other members of the mediating group (Russia/Chechnya) may raise their hands and ask constructive questions of the two parties.

After causes have been identified, a third mediator should step in to help the two parties make choices: What solutions can be reached? What can each of the parties offer to smooth the way to resolution? What changes need to be made before the conflict can be resolved? If a complete resolution cannot be achieved, are there incremental steps that can nevertheless be taken?

10. After you have finished the first mediation, the groups should switch roles, with the mediators (Russia/Chechnya) making their presentations, and the presenters (Israel/Palestine) becoming mediators.

ASSESSMENT

You will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Research

- Did you use the SIRS Knowledge Source database to find relevant information about your topic?
- Did you take accurate and complete notes, including bibliographic information?

Presentation

- Did you participate in the group to identify important elements of conflict and party history?
- Did you create a well-organized, informative presentation?

Mediation

- Did you take accurate, complete notes on others' presentations?
- Did you observe the rules of mediation?
- As a mediator, did you help lead parties to resolution?
- As a party to the conflict, did you cooperate with the mediator and sincerely seek a resolution to the problem?