

World Map of Armed Conflicts

Level of difficulty: 1
Recommended age:

> 8 years.

Objectives:

- Identify all current armed conflicts in the world.
- Gain awareness of bias in the media.

Summary: Students, as news correspondents, search for news stories on armed conflicts in the world and locate them on a map, then create a report on a conflict. The activity is completed in five stations.

Time: 60 min.

Lesson Type: Outdoors in a circuit of stations.

Group Size: 9-30 divided into groups of 3-5.

Materials:

- A map of armed conflicts and peacebuilding in the world, found at www.escolapau.org/alerta/index.php.
- Labelled silhouettes of countries with armed conflict to piece into an unlabelled puzzle-like world map.
- A collection of short news pieces about peace, arranged by country, found at <http://escolapau.uab.cat/alerta/libre2.php>.

Instructions

The goal of the activity is to create a report on ALL current armed conflicts in the world in the shortest time possible, without leaving any out. Students work together to complete the circuit of stations. At each station, they work to get a short news story on a conflict incorporated into a final report. Before beginning, indicate to each group the number of conflicts and the countries where they occur, so students know how many news stories they must get in total (one per country).

- Station 1. Have students look through different newspapers and determine the number of armed conflicts mentioned in them. Make sure each group has newspapers from different days (1-3 per group). Ask groups to gather stories they find on armed conflict and to select the best story per conflict. Once they've chosen and clipped their stories, give them a puzzle piece of their country to fit into the world-map puzzle.

Ensure all groups start at the same station. Once students have found their conflicts in a newspaper, have them research unreported or overlooked conflicts.

- Stations 2. African conflicts. Set up a storyboard linking mobile telephones (for the coltan used in them), diamonds, lumber, gasoline, coffee, lions, giraffes, and baobab trees. Explain that one of the main reasons for conflict in Africa is the wealth of natural resources, used mainly in countries of the global north and not in African countries. Give each group a news story about one or two African countries where there is conflict and a puzzle piece to place on the outline map. Explain that when the circuit is done, the entire map will be filled in (one piece per country of conflict) and there will be news stories covering every conflict in the world. Ensure all puzzle pieces have been distributed among groups at the station.

- Stations 3. Asian conflicts. Elicit from students the name of an Asian country impacted by armed conflict by playing Hangman. Indicate the number of letters and the first letter of the country. Have students guess one letter at a time, and each time they guess incorrectly add one more body part to the hanging man. Groups pass the station once they've guessed their country, before the hangman has filled in and falls. Next, hand out news story about each group's country and a puzzle piece to situate on the outline map. If students are unable to guess their country, replay the game with another Asian country. If there are more conflicts than groups, divide the news stories and puzzle pieces among all groups.

- Stations 4. Latin American conflicts. The oldest armed conflict began in 1964 in Colombia. However, not everything in Colombia is armed conflict; there are also many positive things about the country. In order to pass this station, students must identify at least five things Colombia is known for besides conflict, e.g. food, music, geography, and so on. Once they've done this, give them a news story about a Latin American conflict and a puzzle piece to place on the outline map. If they're un-

able to identify five things Colombia is known for, tell them they must dance a cumbia or salsa, so they learn that at least dance is important in Colombian festivities.

- Stations 5. This is the last station and represents the editing room. It should be done as an entire class. It involves placing all countries affected by conflict on the map. Tell each group it's responsible for locating those countries it has dealt with on the map, i.e. groups must complete the puzzle. When finished, display the map in the middle of the editing room (classroom).
- As a class review and discuss the countries students have learned about. As an optional activity, have students paint the countries of the outline map in different colours relative to their visibility in the media and the public's awareness of them. As peace correspondents, discuss opportunities to bring visibility to unreported conflicts.
- Lastly, have each group comment on the news stories it has gathered over the course of the lesson and as a class share which of them most stuck out. Decide which news stories to include in the report, how to assemble the report, and how to disseminate it.

Debrief and Conclusions

Questions: How many of the conflicts you learned about did you already know? How did you know about them? Were you surprised about a conflict you didn't know about? What about the news stories? Which stories surprised you most?

Additional Instructions

Halfway through the exercise, you could arrange for a group of correspondents to be kidnapped by guerrillas or withdrawn from the game (to make lunch or do other "rearguard" work). Later, find a way to rescue the group because without their news stories and puzzle pieces, the class won't be able to complete the outline map and report.

Extensions

Have students share what they've learned about the map and the conclusions of the report to friends and family.