

## Peace and conflict unit

This unit focuses on what peace, conflict and violence mean, how conflicts emerge and develop, and what can be done to build a lasting peace.

**Key concepts: peace, conflict, violence, non-violence**

Learning outcome	Prescribed content	Possible examples <i>(Intended as a starting point only: for many topics, local and current examples will be more appropriate than the ones listed, and many more examples are listed than are expected to be covered during the course)</i>
Contested meanings of peace, conflict and violence	Different definitions of peace, conflict and violence, including positive peace and structural violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peace, eg negative peace, peace as balance of power, peace in different political traditions and religions, feminist peace</li> <li>• Conflict, eg through scale of conflict from disenfranchisement through to interstate war</li> <li>• Violence, eg direct violence, cultural violence</li> </ul>
	Types of conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Territorial conflict, eg Russian claims, disputes in the South China Sea</li> <li>• Interest-based conflict, eg weapon sales, positive discrimination on the factory floor</li> <li>• Ideological conflict, eg political ideologies, free market versus state-led economy</li> <li>• Identity conflict, eg indigenous populations, more heterogeneous populations in previously homogeneous states</li> </ul>
	Justifications of violence, including just war theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humanitarian intervention, self-defence, religiously or culturally condoned violence</li> </ul>
Causes and parties to conflict	Causes of conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greed versus grievance (eg Colombia, Sierra Leone), territorial control, material interest, resource scarcity, ideology, threatened identity, perception</li> </ul>
	Parties to conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• States, intrastate groups, protest groups, individuals</li> </ul>

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Evolution of conflict	Manifestations of conflict, including non-violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Demonstrations, civil disobedience, violent protests, guerrilla warfare, terrorism, genocide, intrastate war, interstate war, arms proliferation, nuclear deterrence</li> </ul>
	Conflict dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Galtung's conflict triangle, positions–interests–needs, conflict cycles</li> </ul>
	Third-party involvement in conflict, including humanitarian intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weapon embargoes, financial freezes, trade limitations, NATO involvement, UN peace enforcement, election observers</li> </ul>
Conflict resolution and post-conflict transformation	Peacemaking, including negotiations and treaties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Military victory, imposed settlement, ceasefires, truces, arbitration, mediation, peace treaties, peacekeeping</li> </ul>
	Peacebuilding, including reconciliation and work of justice institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Truth and reconciliation commissions (eg Sierra Leone), courts (eg Cambodia, International Criminal Court), forgiveness</li> </ul>

## Engagement activity

The engagement activity provides students with an opportunity to explore the central unifying theme of the course—people, power and politics—in practice and outside the classroom. In the course of their engagement activity, students may, for example, learn about the local manifestations of a global issue, engage with primary sources and experience the dynamics and consequences of decision-making on individuals and communities. Although the emphasis of the task is on active engagement rather than primarily on research, it is expected that students make use of the key concepts, theories and ideas they are learning in the classroom and undertake further reading to inform their planning and actions, and their discussion of the political issue raised in their activities. In brief, the task aims at active and reflective engagement. The engagement activity work culminates in a 2,000-word written report. More information on the assessment of the written report is given in [Guide > Internal assessment](#).

There are three parts to the engagement activity work: undertaking an engagement, doing complementary research and writing a report. Although the written report is the assessed component of the engagement activity, students' planning, actions, further reading and discussion are interconnected; all are required for a good end result. Moreover, students can expect to go back and forth between the different elements of the work: for example, they should do some preliminary research on the context of their activities before they engage, and while writing their report, they may discover areas for which additional research is needed to balance the perspectives acquired through the engagement.