

Why Do We Fight? Conflict, War, and Peace

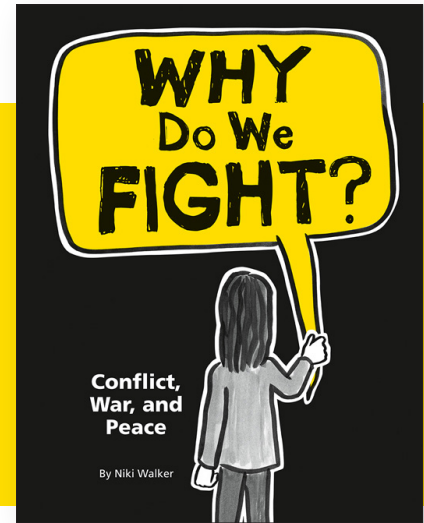
BY NIKI WALKER

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Reading levels: Fountas & Pinnell: X

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INTRODUCTION

With daily reports bringing us what seems to be unending news of conflicts and often violence, it's certain that reading *Why Do We Fight?* with fifth- through eighth-grade classes will make an important contribution to students' understanding of the many manifestations of conflict throughout the world and how they can become part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. Author Niki Walker looks at human relationships and at relationships between nations through both historical and contemporary perspectives, and she helps students make sense of why conflicts happen, how they escalate, and what peaceful alternatives we have.

This guide is designed to take advantage of the teaching and learning opportunities in *Why Do We Fight?*, with questions that help you keep track of your students' understanding of the ideas presented and with activities and discussions that connect the book across curriculums. You'll find those curriculum areas delineated alongside each activity. You'll also see Common Core State Standards noted. At the end of the guide, there is a list of the Common Core State Standards cited, for your reference.

BEFORE READING

Let the class know that you'll be reading about conflict and conflict resolution. Then read aloud the section under the subheading "Both Are Conflicts" on page 7. Open up the classroom to a discussion of the conflicts the students have been involved in or became aware of in the last week. Keep a running count. How many of the conflicts were verbal? How many were physical? How many were personal? How many political or societal? Your students will be surprised by how many conflicts there were. Now they are ready to dig into *Why Do We Fight?*

QUESTIONS OF FACT

These questions will help your students review what they have learned and help you be certain they are retaining and understanding what they are reading.

1. Why is land such a frequent source of conflict within countries and among countries?
2. What is meant by the term "conflict resources?" How do they contribute to a neverending cycle of war?
3. Describe aspects of social justice. How does it lead to security and satisfaction? What causes a lack of social justice, and how does that lead to anger and conflict?

Curriculum Connections:
Speaking and Listening

Common Core State
Standards: **SL.6.1, 6.3**

Curriculum Connections:
Language Arts: Reading; Critical
Thinking; Social Studies

Common Core State
Standards: **RI.6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4**

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4. What essential characteristics helped to make the Egypt-Israel negotiations of Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin in 1979 successful?
5. Is it inevitable that there be conflicts between majorities and minorities in a society? What contributes to conflict between these groups? What can be done to avoid conflict?
6. Name and describe three specific sources of conflict. Explain them in both personal and global terms. Suggest ways to lessen each kind of conflict.
7. When was the United Nations started? What are its goals? What kind of actions can the UN take? What actions are prohibited by the charter?
8. What is the difference among diplomatic sanctions, economic sanctions, and military sanctions? In what circumstances would each work best?
9. What are the best ways to learn the truth about a situation? How can you tell a true statement from an opinion? How do you know whom to believe when you are trying to understand a conflict?
10. What role does propaganda play in winning support for a government action, for a social cause, or for a political candidate? Name and describe some of the tools used in creating propaganda. How can a citizen see through propaganda to reach his or her own conclusions?

VOCABULARY

Many of the new words or new uses of already-known words that your students will come across in *Why Do We Fight?* are conflict words, while others are resolution words. Create a classroom word board, divided in half. Students should list conflict words on one side and resolution words on the other. The colors they use and the style in which they write the words should communicate the meaning of the words. Every student is welcome to add words to the board, and every student should be sure to learn the words on the board.

Students should set aside a half-dozen pages in their notebooks to collect all the other new words they encounter in reading the book or doing research for projects related to the book. They should try to keep their lists alphabetical. (Suggestion: They can label each page with four letters — A, B, C, D for page 1; E, F, G, H for page 2, etc.; for less-frequently-used initial letters, like Q and X, they can put 5 letters on a page.) For every word, students should write the word, copy the sentence in which it is used from the book (or reference source), and then write a sentence of their own showing they understand the meaning of the word and its use.

ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Read the quotes at the opening of each new chapter (pages 6, 10, 22, 38, 56, and 64) with your students. Each student should pick one quote, and write a two- to three-minute speech responding to it. They may simply explain its meaning or they may agree or disagree with it, but

Curriculum Connections:
Language Arts: Vocabulary

Common Core State Standards: **RI 6.4**

Curriculum Connections: Language
Arts: Reading, Writing, Critical Thinking;
Speaking and Listening; History;
Research; Cooperative Learning

Common Core State Standards:
**W 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.8; SL 6.1,
6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5**

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Curriculum Connections: Language
Arts: Reading, Literature, Writing; Social
Studies; Research; Speaking and Listening

Common Core State Standards:
**RL 6.1, 6.2; W 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.7,
6.8, 6.9; SL 6.1, 6.2, 6.4**

they must offer personal or historical evidence for their comments. Have the students deliver their speeches in class.

Now divide your class into six teams. Assign one of the speakers of these quotes to each team. The team should research its person, his or her times, accomplishments, and other meaningful quotes. They should prepare and present a multimedia presentation for the class so that all of your students will learn about six historic figures who helped shape our thinking about war and peace. Conduct a Q & A after each presentation to allow the audience to comment and ask questions.

2. Niki Walker tells us: “Feeling good about the groups we belong to can be a very positive thing. But groups can also bring out the worst in people, especially when they start to focus on the difference between themselves and others.” (page 26)

The family is the first, and perhaps the most important, group to which a person belongs. But families can be sources of conflict. Have your students research and write essays about the story of the Hatfields and the McCoys—two American families famous for a long, bitter, and sometimes violent feud.

They can begin their research here:

- www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1574444/Hatfields-and-McCoys
- hatfieldmccoycountry.com/feud/

Lead your students in a discussion that covers the cause of the feud and the ways it manifested itself over many years. Have them talk about specific incidents that happened during the course of the feud. They should express their opinions and offer their thoughts for ways the feud might have been resolved.

Another famous family feud is at the core of William Shakespeare’s play *Romeo and Juliet*. The two young “star-cross’d” lovers come from families with “an ancient grudge.” That enmity leads to tragedy in the play. Shakespeare lays it all out in his prologue:

*Two households, both alike in dignity,
In fair Verona, where we lay our scene,
From ancient grudge break to new mutiny,
Where civil blood makes civil hands unclean.
From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
A pair of star-cross’d lovers take their life;
Whose misadventured piteous overthrows
Do with their death bury their parents’ strife.
The fearful passage of their death-mark’d love,
And the continuance of their parents’ rage,
Which, but their children’s end, nought could remove,
Is now the two hours’ traffic of our stage;
The which if you with patient ears attend,
What here shall miss, our toil shall strive to mend.*

Your students should break into small groups of 4 or 5 and read the prologue closely. They should help each other understand the ideas, the words, the use of language, and the themes

Curriculum Connections: Critical Thinking; Language Arts: Writing

Common Core State Standards: **W 6.1, 6.2, 6.4**

Curriculum Connections: Language Arts: Writing; Speaking and Listening; Social Studies

Common Core State Standards: **W 6.1, 6.2, 6.4, 6.7, 6.9; SL 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4, 6.5**

Curriculum Connections: Language Arts: Writing, Research; History

Common Core State Standards: **W 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.8, 6.9**

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introduced. Then as a group they should rewrite the prologue in contemporary language in whatever format they like: prose; free verse; rap lyrics; reportage. Each team should present their version to the whole class.

3. “Forming groups is part of human nature. It gives people a warm, fuzzy feeling to be part of something.” (page 24)

Your students may not have thought about the many groups they are part of. Have each student put themselves in the center of a Venn diagram and then add in circles for the many groups to which they belong. They will find that many of the groups intersect. Then they should write a sentence or two describing how belonging to each of the groups makes them feel and how it impacts their lives.

4. In this activity, your students will role-play a negotiation between two parties in conflict. As a class, re-read pages 46–48, so that everyone thoroughly understands the concepts of negotiation, diplomacy, mediation, and arbitration. Then divide your class into groups of seven or nine. Each group should select a “hot topic” in the news. This can be on the world stage, in your community, or in the school. Three (or four) students should be on one side of the issue, three (or four) on the opposite side, with one student acting as the observer. For instance, a group could talk about local support for the public library, with half of the students arguing for increased funding and the other half against. Have them build the arguments for their side and then present them in writing to their adversaries prior to a round table diplomacy session. At the round table discussion, before the negotiations begin, each side should read their position papers aloud to be officially placed into the record. The student acting as the observer should record all pertinent information. If the group cannot come to a compromise position, the observer should step in, first as a mediator. If that fails to settle the argument, then he or she should be called upon to arbitrate the dispute.

Come together as a class and discuss the experience. What negotiation method was most effective? What do students think will happen regarding each “hot topic” in the long run?

5. The Nobel Peace Prize has been given 94 times since 1901 to 126 recipients who have made contributions to bringing peace to the world. Engage your students in research projects to learn more.

To get an overview they can start at: www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace

They can then click on “quick facts,” and then under “choose a list,” click on “show all Peace Prizes” to find a chronological list of winners.

To discover more about individual Nobel Peace Laureates, they can click on a highlighted name.

Each student should select a winner they’d like to report on (make sure there is no repetition). Students should write newspaper articles as if they are being written when the prize was given to “their” Laureate, introducing the winner and his/her/their work to readers. They should cover the acceptance speech and write an editorial stating why they think this winner was or was not a worthy choice.

Gather the articles together in a binder and keep the binder easily available so that students can pick it up and learn from their classmates about this important group of the world’s citizens.

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COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS – GRADE 6

CODE:

CCSS: Common Core State Standards

RL: Reading Literature

RI: Reading Information

W: Writing

SL: Speaking and Listening

READING LITERATURE

RL 6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL 6.2

Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

READING INFORMATION

RI 6.1

Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RI 6.2

Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

RI 6.3

Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated on in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

RI 6.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings.

RI 6.5

Analyze how a particular sentence, paragraph, chapter, or section fits into the overall structure of a text and contributes to the development of the ideas.

RI 6.6

Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

RI 6.7

Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.

WRITING:

W 6.1

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

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W 6.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

W 6.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

W 6.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W 6.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

W 6.8

Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.

W 6.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING

SL 6.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

SL 6.2

Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

SL 6.3

Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.

SL 6.4

Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL 6.5

Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.