

IS WAR INEVITABLE? BUSTING MYTHS ABOUT WAR

First present the historical thinking concept of “Evidence and Interpretation” as outlined in *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts* (Dr. Peter Seixas, Tom Morton Nelson Education, 2013 Toronto).

The objective of the next two activities is to encourage students to think about their attitudes towards war before they begin to view the virtual exhibit *War and Children*.

Is War Inevitable?

Part A: What do YOU think about war?

In groups of four with chart paper and markers students answer these sentence starters:

- We have wars because....
- There have always been wars because....
- War is justified when....
- War is unjustified when....

Then tape the chart paper on the walls. Students take a gallery walk and then discuss.

Part B: Myths About War

Note: The website [Beyond War](#) presents fascinating arguments to debunk 13 myths about war. The ensuing discussion about these points will be very lively!

Steps:

1. Assign students to read, share and debate the 13 myths. **Is the evidence convincing?**
2. Decide now if you will have presentations by two or three students on each myth or if you will have a jigsaw activity. If you choose to do a jigsaw, create four groups and assign each group three or four of the 13 myths.

Myth 1: It is impossible to eliminate war.

Myth 2: War is in our genes.

- Myth 3: War is natural.
Myth 4: We have always had war.
Myth 5: War is inevitable because of crises beyond our control like resource scarcity, environmental crises, overpopulation, etc.
Myth 6: We are a sovereign nation.
Myth 7: We go to war to ensure our defense.
Myth 8: Some wars are “good” wars, such as WW II.
Myth 9: The “Just War” doctrine helps us fight only justified wars.
Myth 10: War and preparation bring peace and stability.
Myth 11: War makes us safe even though it is unjust and bloody; the price of freedom is blood.
Myth 12: War is necessary to kill terrorists.
Myth 13: War is good for the economy and benefits war makers.

3. Have students make presentations on the evidence provided to debunk the myth(s) **or** do a jigsaw activity.

3. Jigsaw option:

- After each group of four has become expert on three or four of these myths, assign each person in the group a number from 1-4.
- Direct students to meet with others with the same number.
- Each new group will then have experts on all the myths.
- Provide time for each member to teach the others about the myths on which s/he is an expert and direct the group to discuss each myth and evaluate the evidence provided by the website *World Beyond War*.

Part C: Debriefing

Group discussion. Or individual silent reflection then writing.
Or more comments written on chart paper.

Suggested questions:

- On a scale of 1 to 10, was the evidence provided by *World Beyond War's* debunking of these myths convincing?
- Is war inevitable? Why or why not?
- In what way have your feelings about war changed?
- Why should we care about this?
- What should our government's role be when it comes to war?
- Complete this statement: The part of the lesson that made me think the most was.....

And / Or use the **Ticket Out the Door** to gauge student thinking about the viability of eliminating or reducing war.

There is another Ticket Out the Door for the end of the unit. Compare results.