

## Briefing a Conflict

*This resource is best utilized after completing the corresponding USIP Peacebuilding Toolkit for Educators.*

**Rationale:** The purpose behind the competition was to produce cases of international conflict that illuminate current problems and challenges for practitioners engaged in conflict prevention and management, conflict resolution, and post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.

**Objective:** To practice the skills required to mediate an international conflict. Once completed, students will be able to use the conflict map to recognize the stage of a conflict and how to mediate a conflict to a peaceful resolution.

### Standards:

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.3](#)

Identify key steps in a text's description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4](#)

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

- [CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.5](#)

Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, and causally).

### Materials:

- [USIP Peacebuilding Toolkit for Educators](#)
- Copies of the [USIP Case Studies](#)
- Highlighters and pens for close reading
- Computers for Google Slides

### Expected Time:

Between nine and twenty 45-minute classes.

### Part 1: Corresponding USIP Peacebuilding Toolkit for Educators Lessons (Optional) -

Nine 45-minute classes

### Part 2: Deep Reading and Discussion on a Conflict - Four 45-minute classes

### Part 3: Briefing the Conflict - Four 45-minute classes

### Part 4: Practice Mediation (Optional) - Two 45-minute classes

### Part 5: Debriefing - One 45-minute class

### Assessments:

- Group Discussion on a Conflict
- Briefing the Conflict Presentation

*This resource was developed by teachers participating in the 2015-2016 USIPeace Teachers program of the Global Peacebuilding Center at the U.S. Institute of Peace. The content of this resource reflects the views of its author alone, and is not intended to reflect the views and work of the U.S. Institute of Peace. For the electronic version and additional information, visit [www.buildingpeace.org/peace-teachers](http://www.buildingpeace.org/peace-teachers).*

**Student Role:** Students will take on the role of a mediator and learn about a conflict, brief the class on their conflict and then practice mediating a conflict.

**Part 1 (Optional, but recommended):** [Corresponding USIP Peacebuilding Toolkit for Educators Lessons](#)

- Lesson 1.1 Defining Conflict
- Lesson 1.2 Perspectives on Peace
- Lesson 2.1 Observing Conflict
- Lesson 2.3 Practicing Conflict Analysis
- Lesson 2.4E Responding to Conflict: Mediation

**Part 2: Deep Reading and Discussion on a Conflict**

Divide students into groups of at least 3. Students will select a case study from the [USIP Case Study Competition](#).

- Burundi
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Kenya
- Peru
- Sierra Leone
- South Africa
- Sudan

Each group will [close read](#) their case study and prepare discussion questions.

Once groups are ready to have a discussion, have an inner circle (facing in) for the group discussing their case study and an outer circle (facing in) for the rest of the class to observe and reflect on the discussion. Students on the outer circle should be taking notes both on the case study and discussion.

Students from the outside will turn in questions they have that could be covered when the group presents a brief on the conflict.

About ten minutes per group should be enough. You can cut the time short if you see them struggling, or extend it if the conversation is going well. Feel free to sit inside the circle and join the conversation.

### **Step 3: Briefing the Conflict**

After reading and discussing their case study, students will prepare a group presentation briefing the class on their conflict. Students will follow the [Curve of Conflict](#) from the USIP to explain the conflict.

Students should focus on creating one slide for each section and keep the presentation under ten minutes.

Slides should be used to assist the presentation flow, they shouldn't be the focal point of the presentation. Encourage fewer slides and keep text to a minimum.

Use Google Slides or another preferred form of slides.

### **Sections to Cover**

Slide 1: About the Conflict (General Overview)

Use the Curve Conflict to explain the process.

Breakdown the conflict into the following parts:

- Slide 2: Prevention
  - Routine Diplomacy
  - Preventative Diplomacy
- Slide 3: Crisis Management
  - Crisis Diplomacy
  - Peacemaking
  - Peace Enforcement
  - Peacekeeping
- Slide 4: Peacebuilding
  - Post-Conflict Peacebuilding
  - Reconciliation

### **Step 4 (Optional): Practice Mediation**

As a class, students should be prepared to act out a simulation. Simulations can be found on the [USIP website here](#). Two recommended simulations are *The Case of "Palmyra"* and *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*.

### **Step 5: Debriefing**

After briefing a conflict and practicing mediation, it is important to dedicate a 45-minute class period to discuss everything. Alternatively, this could be completed as a writing assignment. Here are some discussion questions to help guide conversation.

- In what ways do you believe that your case study (research and briefing) was unique?
- What attributes from your case study applied to others?

- What three big ideas are you taking away about peacebuilding?
- How can we use the Curve of Conflict to prevent or mitigate future conflicts?
- Should more be invested in routine diplomacy to prevent conflict?

**Rubric(s)**

**Deep Reading Discussion Rubric**

	<b>Does Not Meet Objective</b>	<b>Partially Meets Objective</b>	<b>Meets Objective</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Preparedness</b>	Student did not demonstrate any preparation prior to the conversation.	Student came to the conversation unprepared for a discussion.	Student came to the conversation prepared for a discussion.	Student came to the conversation with notes and prepared for a challenging discussion.
<b>Contribution</b>	Student did not contribute to the conversation.	Student offered an idea to the conversation, but did not challenge the conversation.	Student offered questions and would attempt to answer questions raised by others.	Student challenged himself/herself by posing challenging questions and answering those raised by others.
<b>Engagement</b>	Student did not engage in the conversation and ignored contributions made by others.	Student would recognize contributions made by others, but did not respond.	Student demonstrated an interest in ideas proposed by others and struggled to add to the dialogue.	Student showed an active interest in the contributions made by others and would challenge ideas.
<b>Points</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Grade Equivalent</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>

**Briefing a Conflict Rubric**

	<b>Does Not Meet Objective</b>	<b>Partially Meets Objective</b>	<b>Meets Objective</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Preparedness</b>	Student did not make use of time provided to prepare and used the slide as notes.	Student did the bare minimum in preparing for the presentation. Relied upon notes.	Student practiced for the presentation. Did not need to look at notes.	Student practiced the presentation multiple times and gave a strong presentation.
<b>Quality of Slides</b>	Slides distract from the presentation. Providing either too much or too little information and serve as notes.	Slides have either too much or too little information and are relied upon as notes.	Slides do not include too much information, but do serve as a tool for the presentation.	Slides exceed expectations and strike a balance of capturing the attention of the audience without being overwhelming.
<b>Verbal Presentation</b>	Student was unable to present a clear message. Used multiple filler words that distracted from the presentation.	Student relied heavily upon notes and/or the slides.	Student gave a clear and concise presentation.	Student gave an engaging presentation that was clear and concise.
<b>Q&amp;A Engagement</b>	Student didn't answer questions either due to an inability to or unwillingness.	Student struggled to answer questions, but gave a strong attempt.	Student provided good information and responded well to questions.	Student provides insightful answers with ease and comfort.
<b>Points</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Grade Equivalent</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>