



Theme: Hawks and Doves – Conflict

Section 2: The human cost of conflict

Conflicts that escalate and become violent can sometimes result in people taking a black and white view of the situation, depending on what they believe to be 'good' or 'bad'. Why is this two-sided approach largely irrelevant to understanding the human side of conflict in all its complexity?

Learning outcomes of this section

Your students will be able to:

- Understand the ethical dimension of conflict
- Analyse types of categorisation and simplification in times of conflict and their implications within societies
- Realise how the human dimension and human rights are disregarded to varying degrees during violent conflicts

Resources provided

Resource 3: Posters, illustrations

Resource 4: Photos, short descriptions

Resource 5: Written extracts, objects, work of art

Resource 6: Written extracts from children's literature

Group activity 1: Depicting the enemy

Propaganda posters played an important role in encouraging people to support the war.

Divide your students into small groups and ask them to observe and analyse the propaganda posters in Resource 3, using the definition of propaganda provided in the resource (or others you might know about). Get them to answer the following questions:

- What similarities do you see between these posters?
- What effect do you think they are intended to have, and why?

You may want to conclude this activity by getting your students to think about and discuss how the idea of 'enemies' are depicted today. Who and what is viewed as 'the enemy', and how are they represented in different media?



Group activity 2: Civilians in the midst of World War II

In this activity students will identify different victim groups in World War II. They will also realise how the war affected every corner of Europe in different but similarly tragic ways, and this will broaden their perspective on this war as a multi-faceted and transnational conflict.

As a starting point, give students a concise definition of 'victim' (see *Definitions*). Then divide your classroom into small groups, distribute the Resource 4 images and short texts, each on a separate sheet, to each group, and ask them to pair the images and descriptions. In a class discussion, share the results and ask students to revisit the definition of 'victim' they were given at the beginning. Make them question the concept of victimhood and place it in a wider context by introducing other categories such as perpetrator, rescuer and bystander (see *Definitions*). Discuss with them the idea of everyone's ability to resist internally and to exert personal will power while being considered a victim.

Group activity 3: Children and war - Experiences and perceptions

How do children caught up in conflict deal with what is going on around them? Children are primarily affected by the fear, suffering and destruction that violent conflict brings. But they are also particularly vulnerable and unequipped when it comes to understanding why a war is being waged, and who the enemy is and why. In this activity students will analyse visual and written sources that expose in various ways the vulnerability of children living in a war context.

Arrange your students into small groups. Distribute Resource 5 to some of the groups and Resource 6 to the other groups. Ask them to analyse their respective sets of resources using the following questions (which also feature in the Resource) and to prepare answers as a group:

Resource 5

- Explain in one sentence the meaning and message of each object.

Resource 6

- Which conflict does each of these extracts talk about?
- How would you define the type of language that is used?
- What are the differences and similarities between the different texts?

Organise a class discussion where groups that worked on Resource 5 present their answers to the groups that worked on Resource 6 and ask for their feedback, and vice-versa. As a result of the discussion ask them to come up with a list of reasons for and manifestations of children's vulnerability in a context of conflict. Get them to write down their answers on the class board as the discussion develops.