

"Peace Events of the 20th and 21st Centuries"

Educator Tips

While the 20th century witnessed the most destructive wars in human history, it also saw the most concerted efforts ever attempted to limit and even prevent war, to constrain arms proliferation, to advance peaceful means of resolving conflicts, to protect human rights, to prosecute war crimes, to prevent genocide, and to promote peace. "Peace Events of the 20th and 21st Centuries," compiled by the U.S. Institute of Peace, lists in chronological order some of the more important measures undertaken during the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century in the ongoing worldwide effort to achieve these goals.

This list is intended to help educators incorporate themes of international conflict management and peacebuilding into their curriculum as they teach history. Below are several tips for using "Peace Events of the 20th and 21st Centuries" in the classroom.

- **Tell history's hopeful story.** Use this list of peace events as a framework for teaching about history. As you teach about the wars of the last century, make them part of a broader story of a world working to move towards peace.
- **Dig more deeply into peace's past.** This list is by no means exhaustive. Challenge students to research and add to it. Have them create their own peace events timelines, perhaps focusing on different themes such as important individual peacebuilders of the 20th and 21st century or moments of collective citizen action that changed societies and the world. There are a number of free online timeline platforms that students can use to individually or collectively make and share their timelines.
- "A picture is worth a thousand words." The photographs included in this list tell stories of their own. Have students make predictions about the contents of this list or draw conclusions about the events' actors and activities by looking at the photographs. Students could also find new photographs for events, researching the story behind the photos and presenting their findings to the class. Or they could be asked to recreate the timeline only using pictures.
- Focus on the individuals. When teaching about conflict and peace, we know telling individual stories helps students move from the abstract to the concrete. Ask students to choose one individual from the list to research in depth and then share this individual's story with the class, perhaps even in character! Students can learn more about Nobel Peace Prize winners by taking the Famous Peacebuilders Quiz on the Global Peacebuilding Center's website (http://www.buildingpeace.org/act-build-peace/learn/famous-peacebuilders-quiz).
- **Discover the diversity of peacebuilding actors and activities.** This list reflects the many ways people build peace; it includes political leaders mediating a formal peace process, renowned scientists issuing statements against war, individual spiritual or community leaders organizing citizen movements, and many more. Have students explore the diversity of peacebuilding actors and activities by categorizing the individuals and actions on this list. You can use the Global



Peacebuilding Center's <u>*Peacebuilding Toolkit for Educators*</u> to help your students learn more about the many ways to be a peacebuilder (http://www.buildingpeace.org/train-resources/educators/peacebuilding-toolkit-educators).

- **Develop negotiation and mediation skills.** A number of these events fall under the activity of negotiation or mediation, both of which are key conflict management skills. Students can develop their own negotiation and mediation skills through the lessons and activities, including scenarios and role plays, of Section 2 of the *Peacebuilding Toolkit for Educators*.
- **Explore the life cycle of conflict.** Conflict has its own dynamic, and it tends to escalate and recede over time. The <u>curve of conflict</u> (http://www.buildingpeace.org/think-global-conflict/curve-conflict) is a graphic that helps us visualize the different phases of conflict. Have your students decide where different peace events would fall on the curve; remind them that because there is often overlap between the different phases, there are no right or wrong answers.
- Envision a different future. When we focus on a history of war, it can be difficult to imagine a world where war isn't the only answer. When we focus instead on a history of concerted movement towards preventing war and promoting peace, it becomes possible to envision a world where there are other recourses to conflict besides violence. Have your students create a timeline for the 21st century, imagining what new peace events will take place over the next one hundred years; ask them to explain what role they will play in these peace events. Then have them describe what the peaceful world of 2100 will look like.