

Iraq: War and Peace Activities

Activity 5: Debate – Can a war ever be just?

Aims:

- To promote critical thinking skills in pupils and allow them the opportunity to formulate and express their views
- To listen to and hear others' views
- To raise pupils' self-esteem

What to do:

Divide the class into two teams, one for the motion, and one against it. (They don't have to actually support the argument of their team – they just have to present a good argument for the debate.) Sub-divide each team into smaller groups so that each group can come up with a statement to bolster the argument their side is supporting. Hold the debate, encouraging the pupils to use the points from their small groups, and elect a spokesperson from each group to do this.

When all the points have been presented, ask those pupils not directly involved in the debate to vote for whichever side was the most convincing. After the debate, make sure all the pupils who want to are able to share their thoughts on how they felt about what was said, especially if they were representing a view during the debate which differed from their own real view. Also discuss how convincing people can be, even if they actually don't believe something. Do politicians ever do this? Do the pupils have any evidence for this? Perhaps they could look out for examples.