

Peace Talk



IYDGP
2023



Ideas for exploring the global environment in the 2023
International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace by Jeanie Clark

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Gabon, Gaza, Hamas, Israel, Palestine, Russia, Sudan and Ukraine— what do they have in common? As I have been developing this article, these names have been in the news. Have your learners been aware of them this year too? Hopefully only older learners, not younger ones, as some of these countries have had frightful images of conflicts within their borders.

But this article is not intending to explore their conflicts, but instead to focus on the opposite, for surprisingly, 2023 is also an International Year (IY) with a peace theme: the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee for Peace (IYDGP).

This article will suggest resources and ideas for various levels and learning domains, to explore this worthy concept as a part of our social environment.

Literacy

Where could one start, especially for younger learners? Clearly, the terms of this IY deserve to be understood: 'peace', 'dialogue' and 'guarantee'. The meaning of 'peace' could be considered from various perspectives, from within the home, to rival groups, to combatant countries.

Older learners may like to gain an understanding of the meaning of the IYDGP. The box (below from *Discover Darwin*) shows how ambitious the thinking behind this IY is [1]. There are many terms within this statement that learners may need to look up.

Could they then put this into simpler language, perhaps as a diagram, to show what this IY encompasses?

The Arts

After considering definitions, one could ask what peace symbols are known? For example, are the meanings of the black and white icons in the header above familiar? (One is an ancient peace symbol, the other a modern one.) Do your learners know of their histories or of other symbols of peace? The United Kingdom's *History Press* has a good coverage of the meanings and history of ten common peace symbols, which could be used directly or adapted for various ages [2].

What sort of art could learners draw for the IYDGP? *Darwin's Community Legal Service* runs their annual [human] Rights on Show art show in December [3]. Begun in 1995, it invites 'pre-school to professional' artists to focus on human rights and their issues, and this year it has the IYDGP as its focus, as shown on the ticket design below [4].



Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace

In 2023, the United Nations (UN) have declared the International Year of Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace. Recognising the importance of developing more peaceful societies through advancing equality, tolerance, human development and promoting human rights, and in this regard calling for investment in education, including through effective policies and practices, towards promoting respect, reconciliation and a culture of peace and non-violence. This theme calls upon the community to resolve conflicts through inclusive dialogue and negotiation in order to ensure the strengthening of peace and trust in relations between communities as a value that promotes sustainable development, peace and security and human rights.

Perhaps your learners know the John Lennon song, *Give Peace A Chance*? Does it seem to be a general plea for peace or specific to a conflict, countries or person? (A history, commentary and lyrics for this song can be found at [Songfacts](#) [5].) Does it suggest HOW we can act to give peace a chance? Are there other 'peace songs' that learners know of? If so, what do they offer about how to bring peace? What do your learners think peace songs do for achieving and keeping peace?

History/Literacy for older readers

What about stories—as books or movies—for this IY theme? The *Diary of Anne Frank* and *Tomorrow When the War Began* are two books often read by teenagers. They are about war, but one is real, having happened in World War II, and the other is set in an imaginary Australian future. Perhaps there are more stories about war than peace?

How could such books be used to promote a discussion about 'dialogue as a guarantee for peace'? For an historically based book, learners could investigate how peace was achieved, and what role 'dialogue' has had since then to guarantee that peace. For an imaginary conflict, learners could discuss: how the conflict might have been avoided and what role dialogue could have had in that; how peace could be achieved, using dialogue or not; and how that could then be guaranteed?

Are there books that explore 'dialogue for peace'? An international university in Barcelona asked researchers for suggestions of books to read for this IY [6]. Their list is for more mature learners, e.g.: *Our Man: Richard Holbrooke and the End of the American Century* by George Packer, about the Bosnian War; *Say Nothing. A True Story of Murder and Memory in Northern Ireland* by Patrick Radden Keefe, about the 20th century's troubles.

How long does dialogue need to be to guarantee peace? Experience in Belfast, Northern Ireland, says many years. From its turbulent past, based on a religious divide (Catholic/Protestant) coming from a national divide (Irish/British), the 1998 *Good Friday Peace Agreement* stopped the fighting [7]. Dialogues continue in Belfast with an annual women's cross-community event aiming to 'build a peaceful society for children and grandchildren'. This year's dialogue covered constitutional issues, trade post-Brexit, and practical grassroots actions [8].

Dialogue may also be a part of creating peace from conflicts. Can older learners suggest what might be needed for peace between Ukraine and Russia? Moeller examined this potential from the two different points of view and considered many factors, before concluding that, 'To achieve peace, both Ukraine and Russia must feel secure' [9]. This article could be used to identify key points and

summarise the ideas presented. Learners might then like to comment on what they think of his analysis of the potential for peace. .. then apply that to Gaza!

Other articles about peace can be found at the *Australian War Memorial* website, by looking up 'peace'. However, these resources tend to be about the experience of peacekeepers, not dialogue [10].

Geography

Do your learners perceive the world as a peaceful place, or one of conflicts? This could be shown by shading countries or regions thought to be in peace or in conflict on a world map (e.g. using a B/W base map like *Euratlas* (2007) with named countries [11]). To check 2023's conflicts, see the *World Population Review's* map which shades conflicts by eight different colours/types [12].

Can learners name any organisations or countries which are actively pursuing peace? The United Nations (UN) is the highest global forum for country relationships. Does it have a role in peace? Consider this timeline of some UN history below:

Timeline of some examples of 'peace in the UN'

1945 *UN Charter* signed (see 2022 below)
 1999 *Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace* [13]
 2015 *17 Sustainable Development Goals* (SDG) includes SDG 16 – Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions [14]
 2022 *UN Resolution A / Res/ 77/ 32* to establish the IYDGP began: "Reaffirming the Charter of the United Nations and its purposes and principles, and especially the commitment to settle disputes through peaceful means and the determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" [15].

What do learners think 'peace' involves at the UN? The full detail of the *Resolution A/Res/77/32*, quoted above, has many aspects [15]. Suited to more mature learners, this resolution is worth reading slowly, noting the key ideas (perhaps highlighting the document first, and using the dictionary for unfamiliar words) and reflecting upon the worth of these ideas. One of them led to this IY, i.e. 'Dialogue is a transformative peacebuilding method' that will help to 'build sustainable peace, solidarity and harmony' [15].

Have your learners heard of a country called Turkmenistan? Turkmenistan became the 'home' for the IYDGP as it has 'a policy of peacefulness, good-neighbourliness and constructive cooperation' [16]. For younger learners, this country could be introduced as a literacy puzzle: unjumble the letters 'tenusmitarkn' to form a country's name, or how many words can you make out of 'Turkmenistan'? Have a guess where it is in the world and what kind of country it is. While *Wikipedia* and *Britannica* are

well-known sources for such information, the *World Book Factbook* website is also useful. It has a list format, and lower down the list there are less common aspects, e.g. 'transnational issues', which for Turkmenistan has treaties, not disputes [17].

Bangladesh could be introduced in a similar way, e.g. unjumble 'leadbagshan'. Bangladesh's 'Father' said, 'Peace is an imperative for the survival of mankind; it represents the deepest aspirations of men and women throughout the world.' [18]. The *World Book Factbook* reports no disputes for Bangladesh, but what would learners think of it building a 200km border fence with Burma [19]?

The sea, and the land under it, may hold valuable resources and hence become a site of dispute. The tiny Faroe Islands, in the North Atlantic Ocean, has such sea area claims in dispute with its neighbours [20]. Those with Iceland and Norway were settled with a 2019 agreement, but sea borders are not yet agreed with Ireland and the UK to its south [21].

For older learners, are they aware of seas closer to us which have similar disputed sea boundaries? One example is the South China Sea. A search on the web will find lots of articles on this. *ByJU's* has

two clear maps, as well as historic detail, to aid understanding of this [22]. Can learners envisage this being resolved peacefully?

Person to person

What help is there to teach our children peaceful ways to resolve conflicts? *Wise Ways to Win* is an Australian picture book/video about peaceful conflict resolution strategies [23].

Kids Helpline has suggestions for helping children handle conflicts which are an 'important life lesson for kids... related to their age, stage of development and life experiences' [24].

Other resources focus on the social/emotive development, e.g. *Scholastic* provides a range of stories at different levels which cover these values in relationships [25]. Hargraves, in *New Zealand's Education Hub*, lists ways to support children in life learning which involves 'a range of social and emotional skills, such as empathy, communication, negotiation, emotional regulation and thinking' [26].

May our education help give peace a chance!

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Direct links to webpages in this article

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- [15] *United Nations*, General Assembly, 6 Dec 2022, A/res/77/32 at N2272947.pdf (un.org) or <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N22/729/47/PDF/N2272947.pdf?OpenElement>
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