

War and Peace: A Discussion



T2

Overview

In this LE, learners are asked to think carefully about war and peace in very general terms. This is important because it lays the groundwork for learners to understand why the Mi'kmaq chose peace through treaties in the 18th century and emphasizes the diplomatic nature of Mi'kmaw-British treaties.

Learners will...

- Consider the why and when nations choose peace due to safety, economic growth, protection of ecosystems, and other reasons.
- Consider why and when nations choose war due to aggression, principles or other factors.
- Strengthen their understanding of the role treaties play in creating stability and security.
- Understand that when there is conflict there are consequences for choosing peace or war.
- Grow the broader context for why the British and Mi'kmaq might have sought treaties as a means to peace in the 18th century.

Focus

This Learning Experience is designed as a class discussion. The discussion encourages learners to weigh the consequences of choosing peace or choosing war. Why choose peace? Perhaps it is to protect life, allow for economic activity, and prevent damage to infrastructure and environment. The harder question is why choose war? Learners may find it helpful to first reflect on more contemporary (or even 20th century) moments where Canada has chosen war (e.g., fighting fascism during WWII, peacekeeping missions, etc.) before considering why the Mi'kmaq and the British sometimes chose conflict in the 18th century. This exercise can also help learners appreciate just how important a treaty focused on peace and friendship might be.

The discussion prompts and supports are included in the supplementary materials. This LE is a great set up for an exit ticket activity that asks learners to identify their personal key takeaway from the exercise, and to share why that takeaway is important.

PE!

It is important that learners have a clear understanding of the following content:

- *The Mi'kmaq as the indigenous people of Nova Scotia and the Atlantic region.*
- *Mi'kma'kik as the ancestral homeland of the Mi'kmaq.*
- *The concept of netukulimk and msit no'kmaq. (See LE F4)*
- *Core Mi'kmaw values. (See LE F8, Family, Culture, Community introduction)*

Additional Resources

- See the introductions to the **What is a Treaty?** and **Treaty-Making** sections, as well as the **general introduction** to the resource.
- It might also be useful to remind learners of the Mi'kmaw values found in the **Family, Culture, Community** introduction.
- For additional resources, see the digital version of this LE at **Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Centre website:**
<http://mikmaweydebert.ca/t2>

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Discussion prompts

- What is **peace**?
 - A time when people are not in conflict. The absence of military action towards another group of people.
 - There might be some smaller conflicts, but nations (governments) are not at war.
- What is **war**?
 - A time when the leadership of a nation chooses to fight another nation.
 - A majority of people are organized to fight in the name of the group, or nation.
- Many people think **peace is good**. What might be positive about peace?
 - People aren't injured or die.
 - People can work instead of fight. This helps families and communities live their lives, gather and create the goods and resources they need (economies can grow and flourish).
 - Environments (plants, animals, waterways) aren't damaged and ecosystems are kept intact.
 - Peace requires **cooperation** and **compromise**, or give-and-take.
 - **Cooperation** and **compromise** require good listening and taking the time for one group of people to understand another group of people.
 - (and of course, the obverse is true, war is "bad" because: people die in war, it disrupts local economies, damages the environment, allows people to become entrenched in their own ideas and opinions, etc.)
- If peace is good, then **why do people choose war**?
 - People choose war when they can't find a solution of peace.
 - People choose war when they believe another nation threatens their own nation or an **allied** nation.
 - It may help learners to be reminded that Canada chose to go to war in World War II, and that in general Canada still goes to war to fight situations the government thinks are wrong.
 - In the 1700s, Mi'kmaq worked peacefully (for the most part) with Acadian villages for a century before war broke out between the British and the Mi'kmaq. Acadian and Mi'kmaq were able to compromise and cooperate, which allowed each to choose peace. They considered themselves **allies** and never needed treaties to get along with one another.