

Proposition: WAR SHOULD BE ELIMINATED

COMPASS POINTS

USE THE COMPASS POINTS TO ORGANIZE AN EXPLORATION OF THIS PROPOSITION

E = Excitements. What excites you about this idea or proposition? What's the upside?

W = Worries. What do you find worrisome about this idea or proposition? What's the downside?

N = Needs. What else do you need to know or find out about this idea or proposition?

S = Stance, Steps, or Suggestions. What is your current stance or opinion on the idea or proposition? What should your next step be in your evaluation of this idea or proposition? What suggestions do you have at this point?

Purpose:

- Compass Points encourages groups of students to consider an idea from many angles and thereby avoid rushing into judgement.
- The idea of a world without war is very appealing and it would be easy to consider only what is exciting without looking further.
- Figuring out "what you need to know" is complex and needs attention.
- This activity makes the class's thinking visible and encourages building on one another's ideas.

Content:

- The issue must be clearly framed. "Elimination of war" is clearer than "A world without war."

Steps:

1. *Place four pieces of chart paper, each labelled for one of the compass points, on the walls.* Handout sticky notes on which students will write their ideas.
2. *Identify excitements.* Ask, "What excites you about the idea of eliminating war? What's the upside?" If a student is stuck, ask "What might some people be excited about?" Students take time to think and write their ideas on the sticky notes and then post on the E paper. Encourage them to sign their name if they wish. Students post their notes and read others' excitements.
3. *Identify worries.* Ask, "What are your worries? What's the downside of eliminating war?" When students are ready, have them post their sticky notes on the W paper and read others' worries.

4. *Group the sticky notes according to themes of the excitements and worries.*
5. *Identify needs.* Ask, “What do you need to know and collect information about to help you study this proposition?” Refer to the themes of excitements and worries to help you identify needs.
6. *Ask for stances, steps, or suggestions.* Ask students to take a stance or a side on the proposition of eliminating war and provide 3 reasons. Or identify the steps necessary to eliminate war. Or suggest how to enhance children’s safety in war or how to encourage public demand for the elimination of war. Create chart paper with the title(s) of the tasks and once again invite students to post sticky notes with their ideas.

Next:

Using the ideas generated by the Compass Points Activity, students may

- Have a debate
- Write an essay, opinion piece, letter to the editor or prime minister
- Create a poster
- Create a public education campaign
- Form an action group

Source: The protocol for Compass Points is found in Church, M, Morrison, K. & Ritchhart, R. (2011). *Making Thinking Visible: How to Promote Engagement, Understanding and Independence for All Learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

ALTERNATIVE: TUG-OF-WAR

Draw a line on the board to represent a tug-of-war. Working with the idea of the elimination of war

- Label one end of the rope “Children can be protected from war” and the other end “Children cannot be protected from war. Or “War cannot be eliminated” and the other end, “The elimination of war is possible.”
- Direct students to come up with “tugs” or reasons to support one position or the other, writing each on a sticky note.
- Determine the strength of each reason or “tug”, and place it on the rope, placing the strongest reasons at the farthest end of the rope and the weakest toward the centre.
- Capture “What if...? Questions as they arise, and write each on a differently coloured sticky note. Place above the tug-of-war rope.

Purpose:

- To help students understand the complex forces that “tug” at opposing sides in an issue.
- To invite students to explore arguments for both sides of the question.

Content:

- A dilemma, issue or problem in which two views are clearly identified.

Steps:

1. Ask the question, “*Can children be protected from war?*” “*Can war be eliminated?*” Draw the tug-of-war line on the board. Ask the students to label the two ends of the rope.
2. *Consider the tugs.* Ask, “*What are the reasons supporting this position?*” Working individually, in small groups or as a whole class, ask them to generate as many tugs as possible for one side at a time, writing each on a sticky note. It is not important whether or not you consider the reasons valid at this point. In subsequent uses of this process, it may not be necessary to think about the two sides separately.
3. *Place the tugs.* In small groups or as a whole class, students discuss the placement of the tugs. Consensus is important, focus on the reasons and justifications for each placement and the relative strength of each argument.
4. Ask “*What if? What about? Questions.* Listen for students saying, “Well, that depends on what you think about human values (or human nature) .” Or “Well, that depends on how we could change the United Nations.” Frame these as questions, write on a different coloured sticky note, and place above the tug-of-war line. When placements are complete, stand back and generate other “*What if?*” questions to identify other issues, factors or concerns that might need further exploration.
5. *Share the thinking.* Look at each small group’s tug-of-war if this has been the organizational structure of this exercise. Ask “*What new ideas emerged that you didn’t*

*have at the outset?” “Has your response to the question of whether or not war can be eliminated changed over the course of this exercise? “ “What changed your mind?”
“How would you summarize the complexity of the issue for someone else?”*

Source: Church, M, Morrison, K. & Ritchhart, R. (2011). *Making Thinking Visible: How to Promote Engagement, Understanding and Independence for All Learners*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.