

AVOIDING ARMAGEDDON

Our Future. Our Choice.

The Laws of Disarmament and Nonproliferation

Grades: 9-12

Subject: Social Studies (global studies, American history, world history, government)

Background: Nuclear weapons pose an ongoing threat, recently exacerbated by domestic and international terrorist attacks. Despite treaties that limit development and testing of nuclear weapons, nuclear proliferation continues. For example, North Korea has confirmed that it has resumed an active nuclear weapons program, nullifying the 1994 Agreed Framework — signed with the United States — that would have frozen its nuclear program. (For more information on North Korea, log onto Federation of American Scientists: www.fas.org). Disarmament and nonproliferation efforts have often been reflected in global treaties and agreements, a series of which have been established since the late 1950s. These lessons can be used alone, or in conjunction with Episode 2 of “Avoiding Armageddon”– “Nuclear Nightmares: Back from the Brink.”

Tools and Materials:

Paper and Pen

Access to the Internet

Activity:

- Have students discuss their knowledge of nuclear weapons and nonproliferation agreements that limit their use and development around the world. Ask them to define disarmament. Provide some background on disarmament and nonproliferation legislation that has been passed over the years and the challenges associated with compliance. (Or, have students research this background information.)
- Divide students into teams and assign each group one of the following disarmament treaties or agreements:

NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT TREATIES AND AGREEMENTS

- Antarctic Treaty
- Hot Line Agreement
- Limited Test Ban Treaty (LTBT)
- Outer Space Treaty
- Latin America Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Tlatelolco)
- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

- Seabed Treaty
- Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty I (SALT I)
- Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty
- Threshold Test Ban (TTBT)
- Peaceful Nuclear Explosions Treaty ((PNET)
- Environmental Modification Convention
- Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty II (SALT II)
- Physical Protection of Nuclear Material Convention
- South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Rarotonga)
- Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF)
- Ballistic Missile Launch Notification Agreement
- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START I)
- Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II (START II)
- Missile Technology Control Regime
- U.S.-North Korean Agreed Framework
- African Nuclear Weapons Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba)
- Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
- Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty

Instruct students to:

- Research the treaty's or agreement's background — date, purpose, participants, ratification dates, etc. (The Atomic Archive.com <http://www.atomicarchive.com/Treaties/index.shtml> and the Arms Control Association <http://www.armscontrol.org/treaties> provide much of this information).
- Identify historic events occurring at the time of treaty's/agreement's creation, specifically those related to nuclear weaponry. For example, was there an existing or pending war or were nations engaged in nuclear weaponry testing?
- Examine the response to the legislation — level of participants' compliance, implementation challenges, legal loopholes, etc.

Invite each team to share its findings with the class in a format of their choice — charts and graphs, Power Point presentation, oral report, etc. Ask students to compare and contrast the treaties and note what has influenced their relative successes and failures. Have students, either in small groups or as a class, compose a new treaty/agreement that addresses present disarmament concerns and challenges. Students can forward their treaty/agreement to community public officials involved in disarmament legislation, or disarmament organizations. Or, they can submit their ideas to a local newspaper in the form of a letter to the editor.

Grades 7-8 adaptation: Divide students into teams to research a disarmament or nonproliferation treaty or agreement. Create a wall-sized treaty/agreement timeline that reflects student research. Invite the class to analyze the treaties'/agreements' similarities, differences, successes, and failures. Invite the class to create their own legislation that best addresses current disarmament issues and concerns.

Resources:

Disarmament Treaties and Agreements

<http://www.nti.org/db/nisprofs/belarus/treaties/weatrea.htm>

Bilateral Nuclear Arms-Negotiations and Nuclear Disarmament

<http://www.nuclearfiles.org/redocuments/treaties-ac.html>

Major International Instruments on Disarmament and Related Issues

<http://www.unog.ch/frames/disarm/distreat/warfare.htm>

Federation of American Scientists

<http://www.fas.org>

List of sites that include agencies focused on compliance issues and nonproliferation policy

http://dir.yahoo.com/Government/Military/Weapons_and_Equipment/Weapons_of_Mass_Destruction/Nuclear_Weapons/Nuclear_Disarmament_and_Nonproliferation/

Nonproliferation Tutorial

http://www.nti.org/h_learnmore/h3_tutorial.html

About the Author

From classroom instructor to an executive director, Michele Israel has been an educator for nearly 20 years. She has developed and managed innovative educational initiatives, taught in nontraditional settings in the U.S. and overseas, developed curricula and educational materials, and designed and facilitated professional development for classroom and community educators. Currently operating Educational Consulting Group, Israel is involved with diverse projects, including strategic planning and product development.