



DELIBERATING ISSUES THROUGH MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES
SS.7.C.2.13 Examine multiple perspectives on public and current issues.
MODIFIED VERSION
(to be used with Discussion Maker and Issue-specific content packs)

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Lesson Summary

Essential Questions

What are some multiple perspectives on current issues? How might these perspectives impact participation in the political process?

NGSSS Benchmark

SS.7.C.2.13 Examine multiple perspectives on public and current issues. (NOTE: Each issue also meets a specific benchmark see below)

Common Core Benchmarks

LACC.68.RH.1.1	LACC.68.RH.1.2	LACC.68.RH.2.6	LACC.68.RH.3.7
LACC.68.RH.3.9	LACC.68.WHST.1.1	LACC.68.WHST.1.2	LACC.68.WHST.2.4
LACC.68.WHST.3.9	LACC.68.WHST.4.10	LACC.7.SL.1.1	LACC.7.SL.1.2
LACC.7.SL.1.3	LACC.7.SL.2.4	MACC.K12.MP.3.1	MACC.6.SP.1

Overview

In this lesson, students will learn about public and current issues through multiple perspectives and will also consider how these perspectives might shape participation in the political process.

Learning Goals/Benchmark Clarifications

- Students will identify groups that influence public perspectives.
- Students will use scenarios to understand the reaction or perspective of different groups.
- Students will examine how multiple perspectives shape participation in the political process.

Benchmark Content Limits

- Items will not ask students to make value judgments concerning public and current issues.

Civics EOC Reporting Category

Reporting Category 3 – Government Policies and Political Processes

Suggested Time Frame

- One 45-50 minute block for research and background prep plus two 45-50 minute class periods for discussion. Lesson can be modified to be just two 45-50 minute class periods containing only one class discussion round.

Civics Content Vocabulary

- deliberate, editorial, interest group, issue, nonprofit organization, perspective, political party, free speech

Instructional Strategies

- Comparing multiple perspectives
- Collaborative learning
- Deliberation
- Directed note taking

Materials

Projector to display word documents and websites

Handheld Tablet or Laptop w/ wireless Internet access for each student

Discussion Maker Software (installed / tested / running on technology)

Student activity sheets and reading materials

- Handout 1 – Deliberation Guide
- Issue Research Material Packet (choose 1):
 - Public Policy – Cyberbullying (SS.7.C.2.12)
 - U.S. Domestic and Foreign Affairs – Child Soldiers (SS.7.C.4.1 and SS.7.C.4.2)
 - Federalism – Disaster Relief (SS.7.C.3.4)
 - U.S. Political Parties – Create a New Party Platform (SS.7.C.2.8)
 - U.S. Supreme Court Cases (SS.7.C.2.4 and SS.7.C.3.12)
- Handout 3 – Student Reflection on Deliberation

Lesson Activities and Daily Schedule

Please use the chart below to track activity completion.

Day	Task #	Steps in Lesson	Description	Completed? Yes/No
Day One	Task 1	1-6	Deliberation Introduction and Research Phase	
Day Two	Task 2	7-9	Overview and Team Pairings	
	Task 3	10-11	Deliberation 1: A two round discussion on issue	
	Task 4	12	Reflection	
Day Three (optional)	Task 5	13-14	Deliberation 2: A two round discussion on issue	
	Task 6	15	Reflection	

Essential Content Background¹

This section addresses the following issues:

1. Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues
2. Multiple perspectives in educational settings
3. Multiple perspectives in the classroom
4. Conclusions

1. Discussion of Current Events and Controversial Issues

Political controversy is ever-present in democratic nations, and that is as it should be, since controversy is an intrinsic part of the political process and is necessary for the very survival of democracy. But civic learning often fails to reflect or include such controversy. As a result, young people may not learn how to engage productively with the issues and events that animate our political system today and will continue to do so in the future. To ensure that school-based civic learning is authentic, we need to dramatically increase the attention given to discussing controversial political issues—meaningful and timely questions about how to address public problems. Students should learn that such issues are fundamental to the nature of a democratic society, that they can be discussed in civil and productive ways, that there are strategies for engaging in such discussion, and that these issues deserve both their own and the public’s attention.

We have even more evidence now than we did a decade ago that high-quality and inclusive discussion of important current issues and events is a critical component of civic learning. Such discussion helps young people develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective political and civic engagement, and it also teaches them intrinsically significant content. Research has added a sophisticated picture of how the most skilled teachers promote these discussions and how students experience and learn from them. Moreover, it is now clear that discussing current issues engages young people; numerous studies have demonstrated that students are more interested in, and say they have learned more from, civics classes that include frequent and high-quality issues discussions than those that do not.

The need to include controversial political issues in school-based civic learning has a new urgency because of the increased vitriol of contemporary public policy discourse and migration among many American adults to ideologically homogeneous communities. As a result, many Americans increasingly talk primarily with people who share their own views, access media that reinforces their own prior beliefs, and generally confine themselves to an echo chamber of like-mindedness. Yet research shows that “cross-cutting” political talk—in which citizens engage in

¹ Adapted from *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools*. Gould, J., Jamieson, K.H., Levine, P., McConnell, T., & Smith, D.B. (Eds.). (2011). The Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania and the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools.

discussions about important issues and events with people who disagree—develops tolerance for others and builds understanding of the range of views about how to best solve public problems.

2. Multiple perspectives in educational settings

Schools are particularly good venues for such discussions because they already include important deliberative assets, including student populations that reflect a greater range of ideological diversity than most people encounter in the world outside school. Recent professional development programs that have been shown to improve teachers' effectiveness in using issues discussions share three notable characteristics:

A. They engage teachers in examining students' learning (as opposed to focusing only on teachers' practices);

B. They provide a good mix of content and method, so that teachers develop their own understanding of issues while learning how to engage students in discussion;

C. They extend long enough to allow teachers the time necessary to become skilled at this kind of challenging teaching.

Highly engaging and intellectually powerful curriculum materials that work well with students have also been developed. Some textbooks now include attention to current, controversial issues, although that is still relatively rare. We still need a greater number and variety of materials, including materials that focus on local, state level issues (or state-level applications of national issues), materials written at a variety of reading levels, and materials in multimedia formats. These curricular materials require qualified teachers to carry them out, and research has shown that teachers who effectively promote discussion share a number of characteristics:

A. They select issues that are important, are linked to core curricular goals, and already are, or have the potential to be, interesting to students.

B. They can articulate to parents, administrators, and the general public their rationale for including these issues, and they can explain how instruction meets important civic and curricular goals.

C. They draw from a range of discussion models to explicitly teach students the skills they need to participate.

3. Multiple perspectives in the classroom

When young people have opportunities to discuss current issues in a classroom setting, they tend to have greater interest in politics, improved critical thinking and communications skills, more civic knowledge, and more interest in discussing public affairs out of school. Conversations, however, should be carefully moderated so that students feel welcome to speak from a variety of perspectives. Teachers need support in broaching controversial issues in

classrooms since they may risk criticism or sanctions if they do so. Teachers accomplish these goals by:

A. Developing firm ground rules to ensure that discussions are inclusive and productive, and they cultivate a climate of respect and civility.

B. Seeking out or create learning materials that provide students necessary background information, and they make sure students have thoughtfully considered multiple perspectives before discussion. Without such background and preparation, students are unlikely to engage in high-quality discussion.

C. They help students understand an issue or event well enough to form their own opinions, rather than pressuring students to adopt their views.

D. They make sure that materials provide the best arguments on varying sides of an issue, that multiple points of view receive a “best case fair hearing,” and that students engage with multiple and complex perspectives.

E. They recognize the ethical dilemmas involved in teaching about controversial issues. For example, they understand the multiple valid reasons for and against disclosing their own point of view to students, while recognizing the inappropriateness of trying to push their views on others or belittling those who disagree.

4. Conclusions

Teaching young people how to engage in discussions of controversial political issues and important current events is a critically important component of civic learning—and one that is needed now more than ever. Although there is still much to be learned from research about this practice, it is clear that such discussions can help young people understand issues facing our society and can build skills and dispositions for thoughtfully considering future issues. Moreover, young people appreciate and enjoy the chance to take part in robust, high-quality discussions of important issues. They know that these issues are important and want to be part of the public conversation about them.

Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Part of Speech	Definition
deliberate	verb	to think about or discuss issues and decisions carefully
editorial	noun	an opinion based item generated by the editor or editorial board of a newspaper or other media.
issue	noun	a subject that is under debate by two or more parties
perspective	noun	point of view

Each issue also has specific civics content vocabulary which can be drawn into the lesson plan as well.

Suggested Student Activity Sequence

1. Explain to students that they will participate in a deliberation activity to learn more about an important issue. Share with students that in a deliberation, they will read, discuss, and think carefully about a variety of perspectives on an issue in order to work towards making a decision. Give each student a copy of "Handout 1 – Deliberation Guide"
2. Explain that in the deliberation or discussion some students will be discussants and some will be judges. Define what each role will do. Let them know they will each have a chance to be a discussant and a judge.
3. Project (or handout) the headline and opening statement of the issue you have chosen for the discussion. Read each part of the Introduction aloud to the class. When reading the Questions, give students a chance to respond.
4. Reach each Item Summary to the class, call on students to name the Main Idea or ask them "What is this passage mostly about?" If students have difficulty defining the Main Idea, you may read it to the students, and have them restate it in their own words.
5. Project (or refer to handout) the headline and opening statement of the issue as a reminder. Along with summary statements with each main idea.
6. Read each value and its definition to the class. After reading each Value, ask students to give an example of this value in the Evidence Summaries, or in their own lives.
7. Give each student a tablet and have them log into Discussion Maker.
8. Let the students know you have assigned them to be either a discussant or a judge and they should find their partner and then the group they will be part of. Discussion Maker will step them through this sorting process based on information you have entered into the platform. Remind students of the role for Discussants and the role for Judges.
9. Discussion Maker will provide instructions and timing for a 2-round set of discussions. Be available to assist students who may be having problems understanding the activity, working through the technology or instructions it provides.
10. Discussion 1: Discussants will move through 2 rounds of discussion – one using pieces of evidence and one using values as the basis of their discussion. Judges will evaluate how well discussants do in conforming to the discussion rules. Discussion Maker will step both discussants and judges through this process.
11. Provide "Handout 3- Student Reflection on Deliberation" and ask students to reflect the deliberation activity.
12. Students re-sort so that those who were judges are now discussants and discussants are now judges. The discussion will work best if new pair groups are formed. In other words, discussants in the first discussion should not be judges to students who judged them.
13. Discussion 2: Discussants will move through 2 rounds of discussion – one using pieces of evidence and one using values as the basis of their discussion. Judges will evaluate how well discussants do in conforming to the discussion rules. Discussion Maker will step both discussants and judges through this process.
14. Provide "Handout 3- Student Reflection on Deliberation" and ask students to reflect the deliberation activity.



Handout 1—Deliberation Guide

What Is Deliberation?

Deliberation (meaningful discussion) is the focused exchange of ideas and the analysis of arguments with the aim of making a decision.

Why Are We Deliberating?

Citizens must be able and willing to express and exchange ideas among themselves, with community leaders, and with their representatives in government. Citizens and public officials in a democracy need skills and opportunities to engage in civil public discussion of controversial issues in order to make informed policy decisions. Deliberation requires keeping an open mind, as this skill enables citizens to reconsider a decision based on new information or changing circumstances.

What Are the Rules for Deliberation?

- Read the material carefully.
- Focus on the deliberation question.
- Listen carefully to what others are saying.
- Check for understanding.
- Analyze what others say.
- Speak and encourage others to speak.
- Refer to the reading to support your ideas.
- Use relevant background knowledge, including life experiences, in a logical way.
- Use your heart and mind to express ideas and opinions.
- Remain engaged and respectful when controversy arises.
- Focus on ideas, not personalities.

HANDOUT 2 - OVERVIEW AND EVIDENCE SUMMARIES

INTRODUCTION

Opening Statement:

Children at War -- Let's Stop the Violence!!!

There are places in the world where kids your age are enlisted as child soldiers. They face many physical and emotional challenges, and are sometimes exposed to extreme violence. Luckily, the international community is working to eliminate children from armed conflict. We need your thoughts on how to stop children from being used as fighters, and how to get them back to their homes.

Videos:

View the following **two** videos. While watching the first, think about what it would be like if you were forced to be a child soldier. While watching the second, think about things that you and your classmates could do to help child soldiers.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6d_85gjRuo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWcD64TGJYM>

Questions to Consider

1. Why do children end up as soldiers in some conflicts?
2. What effects does being a child soldier have on these children?
3. Who is responsible for trying to solve the issue of child soldiers?
4. What actions can the rest of the world take to eliminate the use of child soldiers?
5. What can we do to help solve this problem?

EVIDENCE

Who is a Child Soldier?

UNICEF, the United Nation’s Children’s Emergency Fund, defines a child soldier as “as any child--boy or girl--under 18 years of age, who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including, but not limited to: cooks, porters, messengers, and anyone accompanying such groups other than family members. It includes girls recruited for forced marriage.” Therefore, the definition does not only refer to a child who is carrying, or has carried, weapons.

(related resource - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2rdYqUcYRPYX3VqVW1JN29mWW8/view?usp=sharing>)

Evidence 1. Child Soldiers Face Many Challenges

Summary: Today, there are approximately 300,000 child soldiers fighting in armed conflicts in many countries worldwide. Sometimes, children under age 18 are used as soldiers because they can be manipulated, and are too young to understand the consequences of their actions. In addition, there are nearly 40 million homeless children worldwide; homeless children, along with those who are orphans or refugees, may see joining a militia as their only hope for survival.

Child soldiers can handle assault rifles and grenades because these weapons are easy to use. Sometimes, child soldiers are used to clear landmines and act as human shields. They may even be forced to fight against their own families and villages. Girl soldiers are often forced into marriage. It is not uncommon that child soldiers are given drugs to help them cope with their emotions and make it easier for them to kill. Even when armed conflicts are over, child soldiers are often not welcome back home and are frequently disabled, homeless, or psychologically traumatized.

(related resource - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2rdYqUcYRPYR0tmcmVGMjRQS3c/view?usp=sharing>)

What is the Main Idea?: _____

Evidence 2. Several Countries use Child Soldiers

Summary: We may often think of child soldiers being forced to fight for opposition or non-governmental forces. Yet there are 17 countries in which children are part of formal government militaries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, and even Israel. In some countries, child soldiers are part of paramilitary or police forces. Nearly

20 countries use children in this way, including Turkey, Mexico, Colombia, Russia, Yugoslavia and India. In over two dozen countries, groups that fight government forces use children in these armed conflicts. Some of these countries include Lebanon, Pakistan and the Philippines.

(related resource - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2rdYqUcYRPYeTB2aWRvQzdVSVk/view?usp=sharing>)

What is the Main Idea?: _____

Evidence 3. Protecting Children Worldwide

Summary: The U.N. *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted in 1989. Countries that sign the Convention agree to protect the fundamental human rights of children worldwide. Specifically, the Convention works to address the neglect and abuse children face, while also taking into consideration of the differences that exist between countries. The Convention outlines three fundamental rights:

1. Provide: the right to have access to fundamental things or services (for example, a name and a nationality, food, healthcare, education, rest and play, and care for disabled and orphans).
2. Protect: the right to be shielded from harmful acts and practices (for example, separation from parents, engagement in warfare, commercial or sexual exploitation, and physical and mental abuse).
3. Participate: The right to be heard on decisions affecting one's life. As abilities progress, the child should have increasing opportunities to take part in the activities of society, as a preparation for adult life (for example, freedom of speech, opinion, culture, religion and language).

(related resource - <http://www.hrea.org/feature-events/simplified-crc.html>)

What is the Main Idea?: _____

Evidence 4. Raising Awareness about Child Soldiers

[the video is part of the “Introduction” section.]

Summary: The Red Hand Campaign was adopted by non-governmental organizations, NGOs, in 1998 to help end the use of child soldiers worldwide. The campaign is simple: young people create pictures of red hands with messages urging world leaders to end the use of children in armed conflict. Youths across the globe have participated, including both child soldiers and children who live in countries at peace. Over two-thirds of world governments have signed an international treaty banning the use of child soldiers. However, the treaty isn’t always enforced, and the international community can do more to protect children from becoming soldiers. As a result, the Red Hand Campaign advocates prosecuting commanders who recruit children, sanctioning governments who don’t abide by international laws, and increasing resources to help rehabilitate child soldiers.

What is the Main Idea?: _____

3. VALUES

Freedom - the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint

What is an example of Freedom in the evidence or your own live? _____

Internationalism - the principle of cooperation among nations, for the promotion of their common good

What is an example of Internationalism in the evidence or your own live? _____

Humanitarianism - the idea of promoting human welfare and social reform

What is an example of Humanitarianism in the evidence or your own live? _____

Peace - freedom from war or violence

What is an example of Peace in the evidence or your own live? _____

Sovereignty - the authority of a state to govern itself or another state; a self-governing country or nation

What is an example of Sovereignty in the evidence or your own live? _____



Name: _____
Date: _____
Teacher: _____

Handout 3—Student Reflection on Deliberation

Large Group Discussion: What We Learned

What were the most compelling reasons for each side?

Side A:

Side B:

What were the areas of agreement?

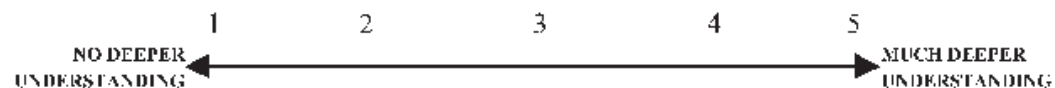
What questions do you still have? Where can you get more information?

What are some reasons why deliberating this issue is important in a democracy?

What might you and/or your class do to address this problem?

Individual Reflection: What I Learned

Which number best describes your understanding of the focus issue? [circle one]



What new insights did you gain?

What did you do well in the deliberation? What do you need to work on to improve your personal deliberation skills?

What did someone else in your group do or say that was particularly helpful? Is there anything the group should work on to improve the group deliberation?

TEACHER INSTRUCTION / KEY

1. INTRODUCTION

[*Teacher Directions:* First, read the *Opening Statement* to the class. Second, have students watch the two videos. Third, read the *Questions to Consider* to the class. You may call on students to answer each of these *Questions*. Or, you may ask them to consider these questions while you read the *Evidence*.]

Opening Statement:

Children at War -- Let's Stop the Violence!!!

There are places in the world where kids your age are enlisted as child soldiers. They face many physical and emotional challenges, and are sometimes exposed to extreme violence. Luckily, the international community is working to eliminate children from armed conflict. We need your thoughts on how to stop children from being used as fighters, and how to get them back to their homes.

Videos:

View the following **two** videos. While watching the first, think about what it would be like if you were forced to be a child soldier. While watching the second, think about things that you and your classmates could do to help child soldiers.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c6d_85gjRuo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GWcD64TGJYM>

Questions to Consider

6. Why do children end up as soldiers in some conflicts?
7. What effects does being a child soldier have on these children?
8. Who is responsible for trying to solve the issue of child soldiers?
9. What actions can the rest of the world take to eliminate the use of child soldiers?
10. What can we do to help solve this problem?

2. EVIDENCE

[*Teacher Directions:* First, read “What is a Child Soldier” to the class. Then, read each Evidence Summary to the class. After reading each summary, call on students to name the **Main Idea**, or ask them “What is this passage mostly about?” If students have difficulty defining the Main Idea, you may read it to them, or have them restate it in their own words.]

Who is a Child Soldier?

UNICEF, the United Nation’s Children’s Emergency Fund, defines a child soldier as “as any child--boy or girl--under 18 years of age, who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including, but not limited to: cooks, porters, messengers, and anyone accompanying such groups other than family members. It includes girls recruited for forced marriage.” Therefore, the definition does not only refer to a child who is carrying, or has carried, weapons.

(related resource - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2rdYqUcYRPYX3VqVW1JN29mWW8/view?usp=sharing>)

Evidence 1. Child Soldiers Face Many Challenges

Summary: Today, there are approximately 300,000 child soldiers fighting in armed conflicts in many countries worldwide. Sometimes, children under age 18 are used as soldiers because they can be manipulated, and are too young to understand the consequences of their actions. In addition, there are nearly 40 million homeless children worldwide; homeless children, along with those who are orphans or refugees, may see joining a militia as their only hope for survival.

Child soldiers can handle assault rifles and grenades because these weapons are easy to use. Sometimes, child soldiers are used to clear landmines and act as human shields. They may even be forced to fight against their own families and villages. Girl soldiers are often forced into marriage. It is not uncommon that child soldiers are given drugs to help them cope with their emotions and make it easier for them to kill. Even when armed conflicts are over, child soldiers are often not welcome back home and are frequently disabled, homeless, or psychologically traumatized.

(related resource - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2rdYqUcYRPYR0tmcmVGMjRQS3c/view?usp=sharing>)

Main Idea: Many youths who become child soldiers have difficult upbringings, but they face even greater stresses and risks when they join groups involved in armed conflicts.

Evidence 2. Several Countries use Child Soldiers

Summary: We may often think of child soldiers being forced to fight for opposition or non-governmental forces. Yet there are 17 countries in which children are part of formal government militaries, including Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, and even Israel. In some countries, child soldiers are part of paramilitary or police forces. Nearly 20 countries use children in this way, including Turkey, Mexico, Colombia, Russia, Yugoslavia and India. In over two dozen countries, groups that fight government forces use children in these armed conflicts. Some of these countries include Lebanon, Pakistan and the Philippines.

(related resource - <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B2rdYqUcYRPYeTB2aWRvQzdVSVk/view?usp=sharing>)

Main Idea: There are over 60 countries, spanning the entire globe, where children fight in government, police, militias, or opposition-force units.

Evidence 3. Protecting Children Worldwide

Summary: The U.N. *Convention on the Rights of the Child* was adopted in 1989. Countries that sign the Convention agree to protect the fundamental human rights of children worldwide. Specifically, the Convention works to address the neglect and abuse children face, while also taking into consideration of the differences that exist between countries. The Convention outlines three fundamental rights:

4. Provide: the right to have access to fundamental things or services (for example, a name and a nationality, food, healthcare, education, rest and play, and care for disabled and orphans).
5. Protect: the right to be shielded from harmful acts and practices (for example, separation from parents, engagement in warfare, commercial or sexual exploitation, and physical and mental abuse).
6. Participate: The right to be heard on decisions affecting one's life. As abilities progress, the child should have increasing opportunities to take part in the activities of society, as a preparation for adult life (for example, freedom of speech, opinion, culture, religion and language).

(related resource - <http://www.hrea.org/feature-events/simplified-crc.html>)

Main Idea: The countries that sign the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* agree to protect the fundamental human rights of children.

Evidence 4. Raising Awareness about Child Soldiers

[the video is part of the "Introduction" section.]

Summary: The Red Hand Campaign was adopted by non-governmental organizations, NGOs, in 1998 to help end the use of child soldiers worldwide. The campaign is simple: young people create pictures of red hands with messages urging world leaders to end the use of children in armed conflict. Youths across the globe have participated, including both child soldiers and children who live in countries at peace. Over two-thirds of world governments have signed an international treaty banning the use of child soldiers. However, the treaty isn't always enforced, and the international community can do more to protect children from becoming soldiers. As a result, the Red Hand Campaign advocates prosecuting commanders who recruit children, sanctioning governments who don't abide by international laws, and increasing resources to help rehabilitate child soldiers.

Main Idea: The Red Hand Campaign is an international movement that tries to end the use of child soldiers. The organization raises awareness, advocates for enforcing international laws related to child soldiers, and urges for resources to support former child soldiers.

3. VALUES

[*Teacher Directions:* First, read each value and definition to the class. Then, ask students to give an example of each value from the evidence summaries, or from their own lives.]

Freedom - the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint

Internationalism - the principle of cooperation among nations, for the promotion of their common good

Humanitarianism - the idea of promoting human welfare and social reform

Peace - freedom from war or violence

Sovereignty - the authority of a state to govern itself or another state; a self-governing country or nation

