

Rules of War

Teacher Guide.

Topic: International Humanitarian Law (IHL)

Age group: 14-19

Type: Full lesson

Time: 1hr

Learning outcomes

1. Learn about the rules of war.
2. Apply your knowledge to decide what is legal during armed conflict.
3. Share your thoughts on the importance of International Humanitarian Law (IHL).

What you need

- Rules of War PowerPoint
- [Video](#)
- Optional print resource (print slides 8-17 of the PowerPoint)
- IHL Factsheet

Definitions

Humane treatment: The dignity of civilians and other non-combatants must be respected, they must not be subjected to ill-treatment, and they must not be discriminated against based on their race, sex, religion, political opinions, national origin, wealth or similar criteria.

Distinction: people fighting in armed conflict must distinguish between civilians and combatants; civilian objects and military objectives.

Proportionality: it is prohibited to launch an attack which would cause incidental loss of civilian life, injuries, and damage to property which would be excessive in relation to the concrete and direct military advantage anticipated.



Curriculum links

History, social studies, sociology, geography, civics, philosophy and law. There are also links with subjects such as citizenship education, human rights education and peace education, which may be offered across the curriculum. Finally, literature or language arts courses may also be suited to the discussion-based approach and active pedagogies on which this session is based.



Background

The International Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement is made up of three components:

- the International Committee of the Red Cross (**ICRC**),
- the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (**IFRC**),
- the 191 individual **National Red Cross & Red Crescent Societies**, including the British Red Cross

The ICRC and the National Societies provide assistance to the victims of armed conflicts and other emergencies. We also work together with governments to promote International Humanitarian Law.

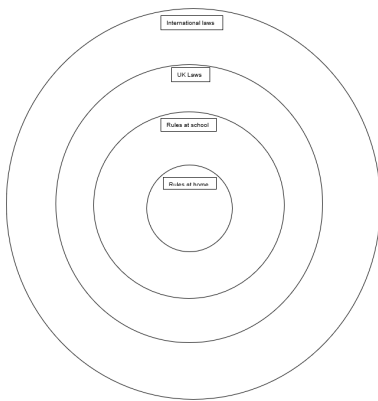
Rules of War

Teacher Guide.

Activity 1: Starter



Ask learners to think about rules they are expected to follow. After a short discussion, learners should sort and write any examples they have produced into the circle template. Answers can be shared to the wider group. Then ask learners to reflect on why rules are needed? Answers may include safety, social order, or protection. Finish by asking if learners believe there are situations where rules change or no longer apply? 'War' or 'conflict' may arise as answers. Follow this by asking if there are rules in war? Collate answers and move on to next activity.



Now show learners the ICRC video on Rules of War.

The animation introduces two important terms: (1) International Humanitarian Law (**IHL**) is the law that governs situations of armed conflict and (2) the **Geneva Conventions** are treaties that form the cornerstone of that body of law. IHL also includes other international treaties and customary practices.

Did the groups guess accurately? Learner should write down the rule onto their image.



Key question:

Why do we need rules?



Activity 3: Apply

Key question:

Why do we need rules?

Activity 2: Learn



Using the eight image stills from the short animation *Rules of War*, place learners in pairs with a single image, or in groups with the collection of images (Slide 5) to discuss. Inform them that each image illustrates a rule of war. Ask them to discuss the image/images and think about what rule of war it depicts. Each group can then feedback their ideas to the wider group.

Place the scenario pictures around the room. Share the terms, 'lawful' (legal) and 'unlawful' (illegal) with learners at a time of armed conflict. Learners can put 'it depends' if they think it is unclear - they will be able to argue their case at the end (see proportionality principle on p.1.). Explain that learners will use what they have learned about the rules of war to apply the terms to the images.

Learners may then walk around the room, placing a sticky note with the term 'lawful', 'unlawful' or 'it depends' on each picture. Alternatively, a blank piece of paper may be stuck beside the image and students write directly onto the paper.

Rules of War

Teacher Guide.

When all students have completed this, ask them to then order the images with unlawful one end, and lawful the other. They should think where they would place the 'it depends' scenarios on the scale. Learners may use the IHL factsheet to help them. Ask learners to explain their reasoning behind the position of the images – particularly for 'it depends' scenarios. Share the answers with learners at the end. This is a great opportunity to remind learners of the rules of war and their importance.

Learners finish by writing a summary paragraph in their own words on what the rules of war are, a few examples, and why they are important.

Activity 4: Share

Key question:



Who needs to know about the rules of war ?

Pose this question to learners and have them write down their thoughts.

Learners can swap their answers with a partner, or keep their list to themselves, write down ways the rules of war are/can be shared with these people. If lists have been swapped with a partner, the partner will write their answers on the other person's list.

Alternatively, this activity can be created centrally on a white board. Learners can write their answers on the main white board, then write ways to share the rules of war with those people in a second round.

Answers, thoughts and opinions should be shared with wider group. Answers could include people working in the government or the armed forces.

Finish by asking learners how they can share the rules of war more widely within their school environment. The most popular answer could be worked on as a class project or be a task for a school humanitarian or human rights group.

Assessment opportunities

Key Questions

Activity 3 - summary paragraph.

Activity 4 - students can work on an individual or group project on a way to share the rules of war to a wider audience. Different media should be encouraged: film, advert, podcast, poster, presentation, video game, etc.



Modifications

Learn – Print the stills from the rules of war animation (slide 5). Students then mix and match to find the correct pairs. See slide 6 notes for answers.

Apply – Present the PowerPoint slides and ask the learners to vote for: lawful, unlawful or it depends. Those who choose “it depends” should justify their choice.

Extra Resources

- [How to talk to children about conflict | British Red Cross](#)