

# THE ROAD TO PEACE



A Teaching Guide on Local and Global Transitional Justice

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Minneapolis



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## ABOUT THE ADVOCATES FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

The Mission of The Advocates for Human Rights is to implement international human rights standards to promote civil society and reinforce the rule of law. By involving volunteers in research, education, and advocacy, The Advocates for Human Rights builds broad constituencies in the United States and select global communities.

The Advocates for Human Rights:

- Investigates and exposes human rights violations internationally and in the United States;
- Represents immigrants and refugees who are victims of human rights abuses;
- Trains and assists groups that protect human rights;
- Works through education and advocacy to engage the public, policy-makers and children about human rights and cultural understanding.

The Advocates for Human Rights was founded in 1983 by a group of Minnesota lawyers who recognized the community's unique spirit of social justice as an opportunity to promote and protect human rights in the United States and around the world. The organization has produced more than 50 reports documenting human rights practices in more than 25 countries and works with partners overseas and in the United States to restore and protect human rights. The Advocates for Human Rights holds Special Consultative Status with the United Nations.

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To order copies of the teaching guide, contact The Advocates for Human Rights (see above contact information) or download it for free at [www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org](http://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org).

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For those who have suffered as a result of conflict.

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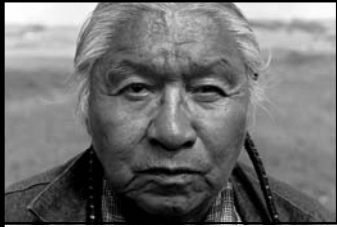


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# Introduction



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## INTRODUCTION



*The Road to Peace: A Teaching Guide on Local and Global Transitional Justice* is a comprehensive teaching guide that introduces students who have a general knowledge of human rights to the concept of transitional justice. Using the expertise of The Advocates' human rights monitoring teams, who carried out work in Peru and Sierra Leone, The Advocates for Human Rights has created this teaching guide to be used with ninth grade through adult learners.

“Justice” is a topic that can be taught from a variety of perspectives and within diverse disciplines. Civics education in the United States, for example, often focuses on individuals' rights and responsibilities before the law. Students of international relations may learn about international justice mechanisms such as the Nuremberg Trials or the International Criminal Court, focusing on issues such as national sovereignty, impunity and cultural relativism in an effort to understand why such mechanisms succeed or fail. A literature or drama teacher might use a play such as *The Merchant of Venice* or a book like *To Kill a Mockingbird* to discuss the meaning of justice in conflicts between persons of different races and religions. Teaching “justice,” then, is not limited to one particular discipline or methodology.

*The Road to Peace*, as its title suggests, does not just teach about justice, but seeks to advance justice. The lessons are planned to encourage creative thinking about conflict resolution and restoration of justice, so that students feel empowered to promote justice in their own communities as well as around the world. *The Road to Peace* teaches about justice on a local and an international scale, asking students to make connections between instances of justice and injustice in their own lives, and in situations where justice has been or is being threatened in other countries.

Specifically, the teaching guide focuses on the aftermath of war and conflict, emphasizing the processes that countries coming out of conflict undertake to seek resolution. After a period of brutal conflict, a country and its people must recover from the violence and rebuild their society. To do so, post-conflict societies will often look back to identify the root causes of the violence, provide justice for victims, and create mechanisms to prevent future human rights abuses. Often, this is a difficult transition that involves a wide range of stakeholders and takes years to accomplish. Increasingly, human rights organizations and other groups have devoted themselves to these issues. Through their efforts, a number of effective mechanisms to address past human rights abuses have been developed.

With creative, thought-provoking and innovative lesson plans, this comprehensive teaching guide introduces students to the concept of transitional justice through:

- Lessons on the root causes of war and conflict
- An overview of human rights and different transitional justice mechanisms
- Mock war crimes tribunal and mock truth commission role plays
- In-depth country case studies
- Individual case studies on human rights abuses
- Investigative tools to study the need for transitional justice in the U.S.
- Skill-building resources on how to apply reconciliation on a local level
- Conflict resolution and peer mediation exercises
- A transitional justice glossary
- Resources for further study and action on peace and justice

## WHAT IS TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE?



**Transitional justice** is the process through which nations address past human rights abuses and reform their societies. The goal of transitional justice is to transition from a former state of widespread human rights abuses toward a more open and democratic society committed to upholding international human rights standards. Due to conflict, a state may have experienced a breakdown in civil society, an increase in state authoritarianism, political chaos, or civil war. All of these circumstances present challenges that the state must overcome. For this transition to be successful, a society must confront the painful legacy of its past to achieve a holistic sense of justice for all citizens, to establish or to renew civic trust, to reconcile people and communities, and to prevent future abuses.

A variety of approaches to transitional justice are available that can help wounded societies start anew. These approaches are both nonjudicial (**restorative justice**) and judicial (**retributive justice**). Restorative justice is the notion that, even when human rights abuses end, a society must work to heal the wounds of its victims, offenders and communities at large. Retributive justice refers to the just punishment of offenders, while finding redress for victims. Both restorative justice and retributive justice are essential to the reconstruction of a society that has suffered from widespread human rights abuses.

The approaches to transitional justice are based on a fundamental belief in universal human rights, and rely on international human rights and humanitarian law in demanding that states halt, investigate, punish, repair, and prevent abuses. Transitional justice approaches consistently focus on the rights and needs of victims and their families. Certain approaches and combinations of tactics are more effective in some countries than in others, depending on the cultural context and whether the country's history involved civil or international war, or a brutal leadership that tortured the population.

### What Are Transitional Justice Approaches?

There are many approaches that have been used throughout the world to reform society, address past human rights abuses and bring about reform. Examples include:

- Try individuals in a court or war crimes tribunal for the crimes they committed during the conflict.
- Remove from office those who violated human rights.
- Provide reparations to persons who suffered abuse.
- Construct memorials and museums to preserve the memory of the past.
- Establish the historical truth about the events of the crisis.
- Promote public ownership of the process by informing the public and involving victims and family members of the perpetrators and victims in the process.
- Reform institutions that are corrupt or that practiced, condoned, or ignored human rights abuses in the past.
- Identify and promote structural change within corporate enterprises that benefited from collaboration with past dictatorships and corrupt governments.
- Promote reconciliation within divided communities and work with victims to incorporate traditional methods of peace building and accountability.
- Encourage officials to offer an acknowledgement of past abuses and an apology.
- Institute blanket amnesties.
- Monitor judicial and governmental institutions in society.
- Provide psychological support to survivors of human rights abuses and their perpetrators.
- Promote civic education on transitional justice and human rights.
- Provide disarmament and reintegration for ex-combatants.
- Conduct cultural healing ceremonies or create artistic projects and installations/exhibits to promote reconciliation and reintegration of perpetrators and victims in society.



# HOW TO USE THIS TEACHING GUIDE



*The Road To Peace: A Teaching Guide on Local and Global Transitional Justice* is designed to be used with high school students through adult audiences. Each of the lessons can be taught independently or woven into existing subject areas. For the most comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, the lessons should be taught sequentially and as one unit. Each lesson begins with a quotation, a primary goal, learning objectives, an essential question, key vocabulary, a suggested time frame, and a list of the materials needed.

Below are additional suggestions for effective use of the teaching guide.

## 1. Journal Writing

Journal writing is an effective tool for information retention, analysis of response, and assessment. Students will better retain the information learned if they engage in written reflection for five minutes at the end of each class period. Journal writing promotes critical thinking skills, while allowing students to express their emotional responses to sensitive material. It gives students a safe zone for expression. Journal writing is also an excellent assessment tool. Teachers may wish to review the journals periodically to offer feedback and encouragement to the class. Suggested ideas for journal writing are provided throughout *The Road to Peace*.

## 2. Vocabulary

Before each lesson, students should define the vocabulary words given as homework in their journals. Most definitions will be found in the glossary in the Appendix.

## 3. Using Small Groups

It may be helpful to formulate small groups in advance of each lesson. One suggestion is to make laminated cards that illustrate various countries, regions, animals, or other forms of classification. These cards can be assigned to students, who will then be divided into groups according to their card. Students can help in the creation of these “sorting cards.”

## 4. Incorporating Creativity

Much of the subject matter in *The Road to Peace* is complex, sensitive, and thought-provoking. By infusing creative teaching and learning methods such as art, music, poetry and role play, students will be better equipped to express and to understand their emotional reaction to the material. Creative teaching results in a more engaging and effective learning experience for both the student and the educator. See the Appendix for a list of useful resources to help guide your teaching.

## 5. Research Tips

Assigning students to find relevant articles and statistics about transitional justice will enrich their learning, as well as teach good research skills in general. At the end of each lesson, we have provided extensive relevant resource lists, which students and teachers can access to augment the teaching guide material. It may be helpful for the teacher to view assigned websites before teaching the lessons to become familiar with the content and to assist the students in navigating the information.

## 6. How to Use the Appendix

The Appendix of this teaching guide includes a glossary, numerous resources for further study and action on peace and justice, and a guide that shows how each lesson is tied to Minnesota High School Social Studies Standards. The Appendix also includes evaluation forms. We encourage teachers and students to fill out the evaluation forms at the end of this teaching guide. The forms can be returned to the address at the bottom of the page. Your feedback is important to us for revisions and for future curricula.

## 7. Curriculum Standards

Each lesson in this curriculum has been connected to the Minnesota High School Social Studies Standards that can be found in the Appendix. To find out how to connect the lessons in *The Road to Peace* to curriculum standards in other states please visit: <http://education.smarttech.com>.

## ADVISORY



Please be aware that some of the lessons in this curriculum contain sensitive language and graphic material which may be difficult and/or traumatic for some students to experience.

Teaching transitional justice demands a high level of sensitivity. As students study transitional justice, they will be confronted with concepts such as war crimes, genocide, and widespread human rights abuses. They will be forced to critically examine human motivations and human frailties. They may be personally affected, leading to intense and productive classroom discussions. Studying these issues raises difficult questions about human behavior. It presents horrific images and stories that may profoundly affect your students. As a teacher, you need to know how well your students can handle the subject and what lessons may lead to constructive explorations and which may not. Graphic material should be carefully used and only to the extent necessary to achieve the objective of the lesson.

In making decisions regarding the use of these materials, we strongly recommend that teachers preview the curriculum to familiarize themselves with the content. As you review the materials presented in this teaching guide, you may find it necessary to make some changes, additions or deletions to meet the specific needs of your class and ensure the students are getting the maximum instructional benefit afforded by the materials.

Some students are more sensitive to, may have experienced, or may be currently experiencing violence in their own lives. You may want to bring in other qualified support staff to help facilitate discussions and/or activities to support those students who have been impacted by violence and/or may be more sensitive to materials dealing with situations of conflict. It is also important to be prepared to provide local referrals to those who may need help. For more information on how to deal with difficult content in the classroom and support students impacted by violence, please refer to the resources in the index.

