



## ‘WHO WINS, WINS’ – THINKING ABOUT INVASION

This session was put together for a request on the theme of ‘Vikings’. It is not specifically about Vikings and does not necessarily represent Viking beliefs and views, but it does offer a way into exploring the ethics of invasion more generally and can be used with many more related topics such as ‘the Romans’. Like ‘Here and Elsewhere’ it also relates to topical events, and, like ‘Here and Elsewhere’, at something of a ‘distance’.

**Equipment and preparation needed:** a whiteboard and pens

**Subject links:** Geography, invasion

**Key controversies:** When, if ever, is invasion acceptable? Is it ever acceptable to suspend important laws?

**Key concepts and vocabulary:** Invasion, defense, pacifism, war, cultural relativism, beliefs, self-defense, rights, human rights.

### Session

Begin by saying the following to the class:

**Say:** There are two countries: a country called ‘Mars’ and another called ‘Venus’ [feel free to rename these]. Martians are a warrior people, who also like to move to new countries to set up new towns and cities. It is the Martian way to invade other countries if they are already settled. Their belief is that whomever wins a battle deserves to take the spoils. Their motto is ‘Who wins, wins’. They believe that if you’re not Martian then it’s okay to invade and kill you. That’s what Martians believe.

The Venusians are a peace-loving people who believe in tolerance, acceptance, dialogue and respect. They are also pacifists, which means that they do not believe in war or violence. Their motto is ‘live and let live’.

#### *Invasion*

**Say:** The Martians have decided to invade the Southern part of Venus so that they can build a new city there because the land is fertile land and because it is a good strategic post.

**Do:** Draw a simple diagram showing two countries and label them ‘Mars’ and ‘Venus’. Draw an arrow pointing from *Mars* to *Venus*, indicating an invasion. Run two enquiries where you ask the class to imagine that they are

- a) Martians
- b) Venusians

Using the following task question:

### Task Question:

- ✓ (If you are an Xian), is it okay for the Martians to invade Venus?

### Nested questions:

- ✓ Is invasion ever acceptable?
- ✓ Do the beliefs of the Martians make it acceptable in this case?
- ✓ Does the fact that the Venusians will not fight back make a difference?
- ✓ Does ‘Live and let live’ result in any logical problems? Does it give license to those who wish to oppress, especially if it is part of their culture?

#### *Extension activity: Venusian debate*

In the Venusian senate an argument breaks out because one of the Venusians has suggested that they suspend their pacifist laws in order to defend themselves.

Split the class into two and ask each side to take on the role of one side of the debate:

- 1) That they *should not* suspend their pacifist law.
- 2) That they *should* suspend their pacifist law.

Conduct a debate. After the debate ask them to return to their own authentic positions and run an enquiry around the following question:

### Task Question:

- ✓ Should the Venusians suspend their pacifist law?

### Nested Questions:

✓ Is it okay for them to fight to defend themselves?

✓ Is pacifism a good policy?

## Links

*TPF website*: In another class? – Thinking about classes, sets and vagueness, Here and Elsewhere – thinking about migration and identity

*The Philosophy Shop*: Gun

*The If Machine*: Republic Island

*Once Upon an If*: The Luckiest Man in The World

*The If Odyssey*: The War (The Wooden Horse) and The Battle (The Ciconians)