

# JIMMY CARTER

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Born in 1924 in Plains, Georgia, Jimmy Carter, the thirty-ninth president of the United States, studied science at the United States Naval Academy and helped develop the nuclear submarine. Eventually returning to Plains, where he became involved in community work, Carter became governor of Georgia in 1971.

Carter was elected president of the United States in 1976, serving from 1977 to 1981. Among President Carter's most successful accomplishments include the Camp David Accords – the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel; the Panama Canal Treaty; the SALT II Treaty between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, which decreased the number of nuclear weapons in each country; and the establishment of diplomatic relations between the U.S. and the People's Republic of China.

In 1982, Carter and his wife Rosalyn established the Carter Center, in partnership with Emory University. The Center, which is guided by a fundamental commitment to human rights and the alleviation of human suffering, seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health.

The author of seventeen books, President Carter received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002 for his work with the Carter Center, making Carter the only former U.S. president to win the Nobel Peace Prize after his presidential term.

On July 18, 2007, Carter joined Nelson Mandela in Johannesburg, South Africa, to announce his participation in The Elders, a group of independent global leaders who work together on peace and human rights issues.



Jimmy Carter © Architects of Peace Foundation

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“WAR MAY SOMETIMES BE A NECESSARY EVIL. BUT NO MATTER HOW NECESSARY, IT IS ALWAYS AN EVIL, NEVER A GOOD. WE WILL NOT LEARN HOW TO LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE BY KILLING EACH OTHER'S CHILDREN.”

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EXCERPTS FROM JIMMY CARTER: 2002 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE  
LECTURE

The scope and character of our Center's activities are perhaps unique, but in many other ways they are typical of the work being done by many hundreds of non-governmental organizations that strive for human rights and peace.

Most Nobel laureates have carried out our work in safety, but there are others who have acted with great personal courage. None has provided more vivid reminders of the dangers of peacemaking than two of my friends, Anwar Sadat and Yitzak Rabin, who gave their lives for the cause of peace in the Middle East.

Like these two heroes, my first chosen career was in the military, as a submarine officer. My shipmates and I realized that we had to be ready to fight if combat was forced upon us, and we were prepared to give our lives to defend our nation and its principles. At the same time, we always prayed fervently that our readiness would ensure that there would be no war.

Later, as president and as commander-in-chief of our armed forces, I was one of those who bore the sobering responsibility of maintaining global stability during the height of the Cold War. Both sides understood that an unresolved political altercation or a serious misjudgment could lead to a nuclear holocaust. In Washington and in Moscow, we knew that we would have less than a half hour to respond after we learned that intercontinental missiles had been launched against us. There had to be a constant and delicate balancing of our great military strength with aggressive diplomacy, always seeking to build friendships with other nations, large and small, that shared a common cause.

The world has changed greatly since I left the White House. Now there is only one superpower, with unprecedented military and economic strength. The coming budget for American armaments will be greater than those of the next fifteen nations combined, and there are troops from the United States in many countries throughout the world. Our nation's voice most often prevails as decisions are made concerning trade, humanitarian assistance, and the allocation of global wealth. This dominant status is unlikely to change in our lifetimes.

Great American power and responsibility are not unprecedented, and have been used with restraint and great benefit in the past. We have not assumed that super strength guarantees super wisdom, and we have consistently reached out to the international community to ensure that our own power and influence are tempered by the best common judgment.

Our president, Woodrow Wilson, was honored here for promoting the League of Nations, whose two basic concepts were profoundly important: "collective security" and "self-determination." Now they are embedded in international law. Violations of these premises during the last half-century have been tragic failures, as was vividly demonstrated when the Soviet Union attempted to conquer Afghanistan and when Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Instead of entering a millennium of peace, the world is now, in many ways, a more dangerous place. The greater ease of travel

and communication has not been matched by equal understanding and mutual respect. There is a plethora of civil wars, unrestrained by rules of the Geneva Convention, within which an overwhelming portion of the casualties are unarmed civilians who have no ability to defend themselves. And recent appalling acts of terrorism have reminded us that no nations, even superpowers, are invulnerable.

It is clear that global challenges must be met with an emphasis on peace, in harmony with others, with strong alliances and international consensus. Imperfect as it may be, there is no doubt that this can best be done through the United Nations, not merely to preserve peace but also to make change, even radical change, without violence.

We must remember that today there are at least eight nuclear powers on earth, and three of them are threatening to their neighbors in areas of great international tension. For powerful countries to adopt a principle of preventive war may well set an example that can have catastrophic consequences.

If we accept the premise that the United Nations is the best avenue for the maintenance of peace, then the carefully considered decisions of the United Nations Security Council must be enforced. All too often, the alternative has proven to be uncontrollable violence and expanding spheres of hostility.

For more than half a century, following the founding of the State of Israel in 1948, the Middle East conflict has been a source of worldwide tension. At Camp David in 1978 and in Oslo in 1993, Israelis, Egyptians, and Palestinians have endorsed the only reasonable prescription for peace: United Nations Resolution 242. It condemns the acquisition of territory by force, calls for withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territories, and provides for Israelis to live securely and in harmony with their neighbors. There is no other mandate whose implementation could more profoundly improve international relationships.

I thought often during my years in the White House of an admonition that we received in our small school in Plains, Georgia, from a beloved teacher, Miss Julia Coleman. She often said: "We must adjust to changing times and still hold to unchanging principles."

When I was a young boy, this same teacher also introduced me to Leo Tolstoy's novel, *War and Peace*. She interpreted that powerful narrative as a reminder that the simple human attributes of goodness and truth can overcome great power. She also taught us that an individual is not swept along on a tide of inevitability but can influence even the greatest human events.

The Nobel Prize profoundly magnified the inspiring global influence of Martin Luther King, Jr., the greatest leader that my native state has ever produced. On a personal note, it is unlikely that my political career beyond Georgia would have been possible without the changes brought about by the civil rights movement in the American South and throughout our nation.

The scourge of racism has not been vanquished, either in the red hills of our state or around the world. And yet we see ever more frequent manifestations of his dream of racial healing.

I am not here as a public official, but as a citizen of a troubled

world who finds hope in a growing consensus that the generally accepted goals of society are peace, freedom, human rights, environmental quality, the alleviation of suffering, and the rule of law.

During the past decades, the international community, usually under the auspices of the United Nations, has struggled to negotiate global standards that can help us achieve these essential goals. They include: the abolition of land mines and chemical weapons; an end to the testing, proliferation, and further deployment of nuclear warheads; constraints on global warming; prohibition of the death penalty, at least for children; and an international criminal court to deter and to punish war crimes and genocide. Those agreements already adopted must be fully implemented, and others should be pursued aggressively.

We must also strive to correct the injustice of economic sanctions that seek to penalize abusive leaders but all too often inflict punishment on those who are already suffering from the abuse.

The unchanging principles of life predate modern times. I worship Jesus Christ, whom we Christians consider to be the Prince of Peace. As a Jew, he taught us to cross religious boundaries, in service and in love. He repeatedly reached out and embraced Roman conquerors, other Gentiles, and even the more despised Samaritans.

Despite theological differences, all great religions share common commitments that define our ideal secular relationships. I am convinced that Christians, Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, and others can embrace each other in a common effort to alleviate human suffering and to espouse peace.

But the present era is a challenging and disturbing time for those whose lives are shaped by religious faith based on kindness toward each other. We have been reminded that cruel and inhuman acts can be derived from distorted theological beliefs, as suicide bombers take the lives of innocent human beings, draped falsely in the cloak of God's will. With horrible brutality, neighbors have massacred neighbors in Europe, Asia, and Africa.

In order for us human beings to commit ourselves personally to the inhumanity of war, we find it necessary first to dehumanize our opponents, which is in itself a violation of the beliefs of all religions. Once we characterize our adversaries as beyond the scope of God's mercy and grace, their lives lose all value. We deny personal responsibility when we plant landmines and, days or years later, a stranger to us - often a child - is crippled or killed. From a great distance, we launch bombs or missiles with almost total impunity, and never want to know the number or identity of the victims.

At the beginning of this new millennium I was asked to discuss, here in Oslo, the greatest challenge that the world faces. Among all the possible choices, I decided that the most serious and universal problem is the growing chasm between the richest and poorest people on earth. Citizens of the ten wealthiest countries are now seventy-five times richer than those who live in the ten poorest ones, and the separation is increasing every year, not only between nations but also within them. The results of this disparity are root causes of most of the world's unresolved problems, including starvation, illiteracy, environmental degradation, violent conflict,

and unnecessary illnesses that range from Guinea worm to HIV/AIDS.

Most work of The Carter Center is in remote villages in the poorest nations of Africa, and there I have witnessed the capacity of destitute people to persevere under heartbreaking conditions. I have come to admire their judgment and wisdom, their courage and faith, and their awesome accomplishments when given a chance to use their innate abilities.

But tragically, in the industrialized world there is a terrible absence of understanding or concern about those who are enduring lives of despair and hopelessness. We have not yet made the commitment to share with others an appreciable part of our excessive wealth. This is a potentially rewarding burden that we should all be willing to assume.

War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other's children.

The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices. God gives us the capacity for choice. We can choose to alleviate suffering. We can choose to work together for peace. We can make these changes -- and we must.

Thank you.

# PEACE, CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND HEALTH

## JIMMY CARTER

LESSON GRADE LEVEL: 8–12  
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES:  
NON-VIOLENT ACTIVISM

### UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS:

**Article 1:** Right to Equality

**Article 2:** Freedom from Discrimination

**Article 28:** Right to a Social Order that Articulates this Document

### GUIDING QUESTIONS:

- How does Jimmy Carter address international conflicts?
- Is there a place for peaceful conflict resolution in our world today?
- How do differing opinions impact decision-making in determining a course of action?
- What role does securing human rights play in ensuring peaceful resolution of conflicts?

### TIME REQUIREMENT:

120 Minutes

### OBJECTIVES:

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand Jimmy Carter's approach to addressing international conflict.
- Draw parallels among specific international conflicts.
- Analyze international conflicts from a human rights perspective.
- Understand the role that human rights plays in international affairs.

### COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.9
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.9
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.11-12.9

### VOCABULARY:

- Non-violence
- Peace
- Conflict resolution
- Human rights
- Humanitarian
- Democracy
- Development

### CONCEPTS:

- Human rights
- Conflict resolution
- Peace
- Nobel Peace Prize
- Economic development
- Social development
- Humanity

### TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED:

- Internet access

### MATERIALS:

- Large sheets of paper
- Jimmy Carter's Nobel acceptance speech: [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2002/carter-lecture.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2002/carter-lecture.html)
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>
- The Geneva Convention of 1949 and their Additional Protocols: [http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA\\_CustomProductCatalog/m3640104\\_IHL\\_SummaryGenevaConv.pdf](http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m3640104_IHL_SummaryGenevaConv.pdf)

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

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### ANTICIPATORY SET

Jimmy Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work:

*“to find peaceful solutions to international conflicts, to advance democracy and human rights, and to promote economic and social development”*

Write the above quotation on the board and then write the three concepts, shown in bold font, on separate pieces of large paper. Make the quotation available to students on paper if needed. Use large enough paper to allow students to write comments around the text. The three large pieces of paper, with the student comments, should be visible throughout the lesson.

- Have students engage in a short writing exercise that responds to the following:
  - Of the reasons for which Jimmy Carter was awarded the Nobel Peace prize, select the one that matters the most to you.
  - Give three reasons why you selected the concept that means the most to you.
  - Select the concept you think is most critical to achieving world peace.
  - Provide three reasons that this concept is critical in achieving world peace.

**NOTE TO TEACHER:** Students may select the same area of work and give similar reasoning for its important. Just make sure that the student provides reasoning beyond “It is important to me.” Help students make a more global connection.

### ACTIVITY 1

“War may sometimes be a necessary evil. But no matter how necessary, it is always an evil, never a good. We will not learn how to live together in peace by killing each other’s children.”

From Jimmy Carter’s Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech

Write the above excerpt from Jimmy Carter’s acceptance speech on the board.

- 1 After reading the above quotation from Jimmy Carter’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech, divide students based on the following:
  - If they are comfortable with the ideas expressed
  - If they are uncomfortable with the ideas expressed
  - If they are not sure how the ideas make them feel
- 2 In the smaller groups, ask students to capture the feelings of the group as they relate to the quotation.
- 3 Each group will report out to the class.
- 4 As a class, examine the opinions expressed in response to the quotation.
- 5 After the class discussion, ask students if anyone changed her or his mind, and why or why not.

### ACTIVITY 2

*“The bond of our common humanity is stronger than the divisiveness of our fears and prejudices. God gives us the capacity for choice. We can choose to alleviate suffering. We can choose to work together for peace. We can make these changes—and we must.”*

*From Jimmy Carter’s Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech*

- Write the above excerpt from Jimmy Carter’s acceptance speech on the board.
- Repeat the above activity using the second quote.

### ACTIVITY 3

- 1 Break the class into small groups. Make sure each group consists of students who had differing opinions in Activities 1 and 2.
- 2 Give each group a current or recent conflict; make sure to select conflicts from different regions of the world.
  - Tip for Teacher: This lesson can be used to introduce a larger unit studying a specific conflict. In this case, all groups can examine the same conflict or the conflict at different stages.
- 3 Make accessible the following documents:
  - Jimmy Carter’s full Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech
  - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights
  - The Geneva Conventions of 1949 and their Additional Protocols
- 4 Have each group read the above documents.
- 5 Have students analyze key aspects of the conflict and, drawing from Jimmy Carter’s acceptance speech, the UDHR and the Geneva Conventions, determine a course of action.
- 6 Have each group report to the class on:
  - how the course of action selected advanced the approach to conflict resolution advocated by Jimmy Carter and/or the UDHR and Geneva Convention and;
  - how they worked together with differing opinions.
- 7 As a class, using the following questions, discuss how this exercise mirrors conflict resolution at the international level.
  - How did the group arrive at the agreed-upon course of action?
  - What are some effective strategies for having opinions heard?
  - Why do you think some opinions are acted upon while others are not?
  - Can conflict be avoided by realizing basic, fundamental human rights?

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES (CONTINUED)

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### CUMULATING ACTIVITY

- Peaceful solutions to international conflicts
  - Advance democracy and human rights
  - Promote economic and social development
- 1 Have the class consider the three concepts and the student comments from the beginning of the lesson.
  - 2 Ask students to reflect on their initial thinking in regard to each concept and whether its level of importance, both personally and as a tool for achieving international peace, has changed.
  - 3 Ask each student to select the concept that means the most to him or her and have each write a letter to Jimmy Carter telling him why this aspect of his work changed the world.

## BECOME A DEFENDER

Jimmy Carter advocates for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, large or small. How are conflicts resolved in your school? Are avenues for peaceful resolution of conflicts available to all members of your community?

### ADVANCE PEACEFUL CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN YOUR SCHOOL

Determine whether your school has a method for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

- If your school has a program, meet with the faculty adviser to better understand the specifics of the program. Is it a peer mediation model? Do all students know how to access the program? Do students think the program works?
- If there are aspects of the program that are unclear or are not working for all students, work with the adviser to address those concerns.
- Make sure everyone know about it!
  - Organize an information table during lunch or afternoon dismissal.
  - Host a Conflict Resolution Day—educate your community about how conflicts can be resolved peacefully.
  - Host a panel discussion with differing opinions on how to resolve conflicts.
  - Organize students to write and adopted a Conflict-Free Zone pledge and post it at the entrance of the school.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### **The Carter Center**

<http://www.cartercenter.org/index.html>

The Carter Center, in partnership with Emory University, is guided by a fundamental commitment to human rights and the alleviation of human suffering; it seeks to prevent and resolve conflicts, enhance freedom and democracy, and improve health.

### **Jimmy Carter Library and Museum**

<http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/>

The Carter Presidential Library and Museum is filled with documents, photographs and other media used by researchers to study the different aspects of the Carter administration. The museum allows visitors to follow the path of a boy from rural south Georgia who became the 39th President of the United States.

### **Jimmy Carter | The White House**

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/presidents/james-carter/>

Information on Carter's biography and administration.

### **Nobel Prize**

[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/peace/laureates/2002/carter-bio.html#](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2002/carter-bio.html#)

Biography, photos, and speeches of Jimmy Carter associated with his receiving the Nobel Prize.

### **Jimmy Carter—"American Experience"**

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/carter/>

Jimmy Carter's story is one of the greatest dramas in American politics. In 1980, he was overwhelmingly voted out of office in a humiliating defeat. Over the subsequent two decades, he became one of the most admired statesmen and humanitarians in America and the world. Jimmy Carter, part of AMERICAN EXPERIENCE's award-winning Presidents series, traces his rapid ascent in politics, dramatic fall from grace and unexpected resurrection.

### **Jimmy and Rosalynne Carter Work Project**

[http://www.habitat.org/how/default\\_jcwp.aspx](http://www.habitat.org/how/default_jcwp.aspx)

The Jimmy & Rosalynn Carter Work Project helps to raise awareness for the critical need for simple, decent and affordable housing. The event is held at a different location each year and attracts volunteers from around the world.