Lesson 1: Have You Ever Wondered?

WHAT IS CONFLICT?

Fighting is just one form of what we call conflict. According to World Book Dictionary, a conflict is "a fight, struggle or battle; a disagreement, dispute, or a quarrel."

Conflict is a natural part of our lives. Conflict can be as small as an argument or as big as a war; it occurs whenever people are living, working or playing together. Every conflict has at least two sides, and each side thinks it is right. In a conflict, people may get hurt. They can be physically injured or even killed. Their feelings can get hurt. They can lose something they own, or they may just feel frustrated and angry.

It is not easy for all the people involved to "see" a conflict situation with the same eyes. Our perceptions are shaped by our experiences, beliefs, values, knowledge and skills.

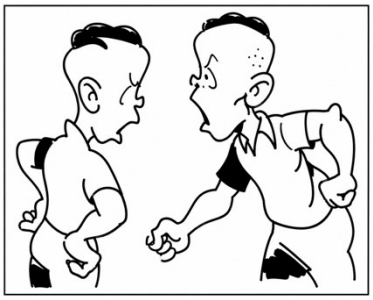
WHY STUDY CONFLICT?

It is important to study conflict because most people spend a great deal of time and energy handling conflict badly. Although it is not possible to eliminate conflict from our lives, it is possible to learn to deal with it properly.

We need to learn about the causes of conflict and the consequences when conflicts are ignored, avoided, or settled in unsatisfactory ways. Learning about conflict is important to all of us who want to make our lives more joyful, caring and loving.

As strange as it may seem, conflict offers people the opportunity to look at a problem creatively, from a new perspective with new ideas. Conflict can be a great motivator for change. Human history is filled with many exciting examples of conflicts which were resolved constructively and nonviolently. Remember a peaceful world begins with you!

You read the word "perception" in the passage. What does it mean? (Use your dictionary and write the definition below.) _____



YOUR CHALLENGES!

1. Your teacher will read to the class a newspaper story about a conflict happening right now. Join in the class discussion about how that conflict could be peacefully resolved and write down the suggestions from the class.
2. Suggest three ways in which you can help to make a more peaceful world.

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As a peacemaker I learned

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