

When Commonwealth Heads of Government met in Singapore in January 1971 they agreed on a set of ideals which are subscribed to by all members. These were expressed in the Declaration of Commonwealth Principles. In October 1991, twenty years later, they re-affirmed their commitment to the Principles and charted areas for Commonwealth action in the 1990s in the Harare Commonwealth Declaration. Both Declarations are reproduced below. The activities in this section of the handbook are designed to help students think about some of the ideals expressed in the Declarations and the problems that need to be tackled and overcome.

Older students could do more detailed and searching work on the Singapore Declaration of Commonwealth Principles and the Harare Commonwealth Declaration and on the other Declarations and Statements which have issued from Heads of Government Meetings. These include:

- The Gleneagles Agreement on Sporting Contacts with South Africa (1977)
- The Lusaka Declaration on Racism and Racial Prejudice (1979)
- The Melbourne Declaration (1981)
- The Goa Declaration on International Security (1983)
- The New Delhi Statement on Economic Action (1983)
- The Nassau Accord on Southern Africa (1985)
- The Okanagan Statement and Programme of Action on Southern Africa (1987)
- The Vancouver Declaration on World Trade (1987)
- The Kuala Lumpur Statement on Southern Africa (1989)
- The Langkawi Declaration on the Environment (1989)

The Declaration of Commonwealth Principles

The Commonwealth of Nations is a voluntary association of independent sovereign states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the common interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.

Members of the Commonwealth come from territories in the six continents and five oceans, include peoples of different races, languages and religions, and display every stage of economic development from poor developing nations to wealthy industrialised nations. They encompass a rich variety of cultures, traditions and institutions.

Membership of the Commonwealth is compatible with the freedom of member governments to be non-aligned or to belong to any other grouping, association or alliance. Within this diversity all members of the Commonwealth hold certain principles in common. It is by pursuing these principles that the Commonwealth can continue to influence international society for the benefit of mankind.

We believe that international peace and order are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind; we therefore support the United Nations and seek to strengthen its influence for peace in the world, and its efforts to remove the causes of tension between nations.

We believe in the liberty of the individual, in equal rights for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief, and in their inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which they live. We therefore strive to promote in each of our countries those representative institutions and guarantees for personal freedom under the law that are our common heritage.

We recognise racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness threatening the healthy development of the human race and racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil of society. Each of us will vigorously combat this evil within our own nation. No country will afford to regimes which practise racial discrimination assistance which in its own judgement directly contributes to the pursuit or consolidation of this evil policy.

We oppose all forms of colonial domination and racial oppression and are committed to the principles of human dignity and equality. We will therefore use all our efforts to foster human equality and dignity everywhere, and to further the principles of self-determination and non-racialism.

We believe that the wide disparities in wealth now existing between different sections of mankind are too great to be tolerated. They also create world tensions. Our aim is their progressive removal. We therefore seek to use our efforts to overcome poverty, ignorance and disease, in raising standards of life and achieving a more equitable international society.

To this end our aim is to achieve the freest possible flow of international trade on terms fair and equitable to all, taking into account the special requirements of the developing countries, and to encourage the flow of adequate resources, including governmental and private resources, to the developing countries, bearing in mind the importance of doing this in a true spirit of partnership and of establishing for this purpose in the developing countries conditions which are conducive to sustained investment and growth.

We believe that international co-operation is essential to remove the causes of war, promote tolerance, combat injustice, and secure development among the peoples of the world. We are convinced that the Commonwealth is one of the most fruitful associations for these purposes.

In pursuing these principles the members of the Commonwealth believe that they can provide a constructive example of the multi-national approach which is vital to peace and progress in the modern world. The association is based on consultation, discussion and co-operation.

In rejecting coercion as an instrument of policy they recognise that the security of each member state from external aggression is a matter of concern to all members. It provides many channels for continuing exchanges of knowledge and views on professional, cultural, economic, legal and political issues among member states.

These relationships we intend to foster and extend, for we believe that our multi-national association can expand human understanding and understanding among nations, assist in the elimination of discrimination based on differences of race, colour or creed, maintain and strengthen personal liberty, contribute to the enrichment of life for all, and provide a powerful influence for peace among nations.

Singapore 1971

Harare Commonwealth Declaration

- 1 The Heads of Government of the countries of the Commonwealth, meeting in Harare, reaffirm their confidence in the Commonwealth as a voluntary association of sovereign independent states, each responsible for its own policies, consulting and co-operating in the interests of their peoples and in the promotion of international understanding and world peace.
- 2 Members of the Commonwealth include people of many different races and origins, encompass every state of economic development, and comprise a rich variety of cultures, traditions and institutions.
- 3 The special strength of the Commonwealth lies in the combination of the diversity of its members with their shared inheritance in language, culture and the rule of law. The Commonwealth way is to seek consensus through consultation and the sharing of experience. It is uniquely placed to serve as a model and a catalyst for new forms of friendship and co-operation to all in the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations.
- 4 Its members also share a commitment to certain fundamental principles. These were set out in a Declaration of Commonwealth Principles agreed by our predecessors at their Meeting in Singapore in 1971. Those principles have stood the test of time, and we reaffirm our full and continuing commitment to them today. In particular, no less today than 20 years ago:

We believe that international peace and order, global economic development and the rule of international law are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind;

We believe in the liberty of the individual under the law, in equal rights for all citizens regardless of gender, race, colour, creed or political belief, and in the individual's inalienable right to participate by means of free and democratic political processes in framing the society in which he or she lives;

We recognise racial prejudice and intolerance as a dangerous sickness and threat to healthy development, and racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil;

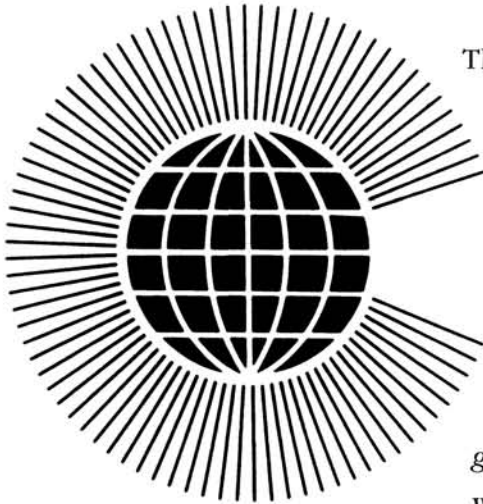
We oppose all forms of racial oppression, and we are committed to the principles of human dignity and equality;

We recognise the importance and urgency of economic and social development to satisfy the basic needs and aspirations of the vast majority of the peoples of the world, and seek the progressive removal of the wide disparities in living standards amongst our members.

- 5 In Harare, our purpose has been to apply those principles in the contemporary situation as the Commonwealth prepares to face the challenges of the 1990s and beyond.
- 6 Internationally, the world is no longer locked in the iron grip of the Cold War. Totalitarianism is giving way to democracy and justice in many parts of the world. Decolonisation is largely complete. Significant changes are at last under way in South Africa. These changes, so desirable and heartening in themselves, present the world and the Commonwealth with new tasks and challenges.
- 7 In the last twenty years, several Commonwealth countries have made significant progress in economic and social development. There is increasing recognition that commitment to market principles and openness to international trade and investment can promote economic progress and improve living standards. Many Commonwealth countries are poor and face acute problems, including excessive population growth, crushing poverty, debt burdens and environmental degradation. More than half our member states are particularly vulnerable because of their very small societies.
- 8 Only sound and sustainable development can offer these millions the prospect of betterment. Achieving this will require a flow of public and private resources from the developed to the developing world, and domestic and international regimes conducive to the realisation of these goals. Development facilitates the task of tackling a range of problems which affect the whole global community such as environmental degradation, the problems of migration and refugees, the fight against communicable diseases, and drug production and trafficking.
- 9 Having reaffirmed the principles to which the Commonwealth is committed, and reviewed the problems and challenges which the world, and the Commonwealth as part of it, face, we pledge the Commonwealth and our countries to work with renewed vigour, concentrating especially in the following areas:
 - the protection and promotion of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth:
 - democracy, democratic processes and institutions which reflect national circumstances, the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government
 - fundamental human rights, including equal rights and opportunities for all citizens regardless of race, colour, creed or political belief
 - equality for women, so that they may exercise their full and equal rights
 - provision of universal access to education for the population of our countries
 - continuing action to bring about the end of apartheid and the establishment of a free, democratic, non-racial and prosperous South Africa
 - The promotion of sustainable development and the alleviation of poverty in the countries of the Commonwealth through:
 - a stable international economic framework within which growth can be achieved
 - sound economic management recognising the central role of the market economy

- effective population policies and programmes
 - sound management of technological change
 - the freest possible flow of multilateral trade on terms fair and equitable to all, taking account of the special requirements of developing countries
 - an adequate flow of resources from the developed to developing countries, and action to alleviate the debt burdens of the developing countries most in need
 - the development of human resources, in particular through education, training, health, culture, sport and programmes for strengthening family and community support, paying special attention to the needs of women, youth and children
 - effective and increasing programmes of bilateral and multilateral co-operation aimed at raising living standards
- extending the benefits of development within a framework of respect for human rights
 - the protection of the environment through respect for the principles of sustainable development which we enunciated at Langkawi
 - action to combat drug trafficking and abuse and communicable diseases
 - help for small Commonwealth states in tackling their particular economic and security problems
 - support of the United Nations and other international institutions in the world's search for peace, disarmament and effective arms control; and in the promotion of international consensus on major global political, economic and social issues
- 10** To give weight and effectiveness to our commitments we intend to focus and improve Commonwealth co-operation in these areas. This would include strengthening the capacity of the Commonwealth to respond to requests from members for assistance in entrenching the practices of democracy, accountable administration and the rule of law.
- 11** We call on all the intergovernmental institutions of the Commonwealth to seize the opportunities presented by these challenges. We pledge ourselves to assist them to develop programmes which harness our shared historical, professional, cultural and linguistic heritage and which complement the work of other international and regional organisations.
- 12** We invite the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and non-governmental Commonwealth organisations to play their full part in promoting these objectives, in a spirit of co-operation and mutual support.
- 13** In reaffirming the principles of the Commonwealth and committing ourselves to pursue them in policy and action in response to the challenges of the 1990s, in areas where we believe that the Commonwealth has a distinctive contribution to offer, we the Heads of Government express our determination to renew and enhance the value and importance of the Commonwealth as an institution which can and should strengthen and enrich the lives not only of its own members and their peoples but also of the wider community of peoples of which they are a part.

Harare, 20 October 1991



The Commonwealth symbol

The four suggested activities relate to the following principles embodied in the 1971 Declaration and in the Harare Declaration of 1991:

We believe that international peace and order are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind.

We recognise racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness and racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil in society.

We believe that the wide disparities in wealth now existing between different sections of mankind are too great to be tolerated.

We believe that international co-operation is essential.

ACTIVITY 1



Level: Primary/secondary

Priorities for peace

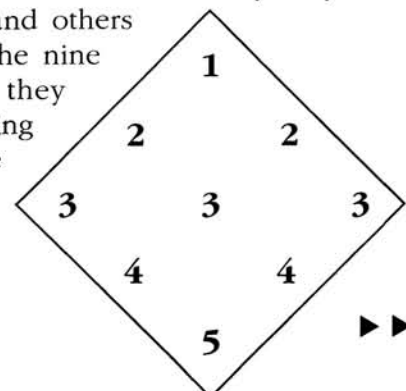
This activity relates to the Commonwealth principle: *We believe that international peace and order are essential to the security and prosperity of mankind.*

As preparation for the main activity, ask students to draw pictures or 'mental maps' illustrating their ideas about one of the following:

- Peace and conflict in our community
- Planet Earth (showing what is going well and what is going badly)
- A peaceful world

Working in pairs or small groups, students should then talk about their pictures and discuss the choice of images they have included.

Next, ask students - still in their pairs or groups - to look at nine statements about peace (or, alternatively, war or conflict). These can be thought up by the students themselves, or a list such as the one below can be provided. **The nine statements are NOT statements of truth; they represent nine possible viewpoints and in some cases are deliberately provocative.** Each statement should be written on a separate card or piece of paper. Students select the ones they agree with and the ones they disagree with. They should discuss why they find certain ideas appealing or convincing and others unacceptable. Then they should rank the nine statements according to the priorities they agree upon as important. A way of allowing some ideas to be given equal importance is to create a diamond shape, as illustrated here:



ACTIVITY 1: CONTINUED

Images of peace

Rival superpowers having equal stockpiles of nuclear and conventional weapons so that neither will risk attacking the other.

A beautiful garden. Cool shade under the trees on a hot day. Birds singing.

A country run democratically, everyone having shelter, education and medical care, everyone participating in development.

A group of children playing with toy weapons, everyone joining in.

Countries with nuclear weapons agreeing to stop supplying armaments to other countries.

Two friends arguing on a subject they both feel strongly about but without losing their tempers.

Someone near death at peace with the people they have known and with God.

A government succeeding in stamping out a group of terrorists who have been planting bombs in shops and railway stations.

Two countries trading with each other - one selling raw materials and the other manufactured goods.

From principle to practice

This activity could be followed by an examination of the Commonwealth's part in conflict-solving or working for peace and security e.g. its role in assisting Zimbabwe to gain independence; the concern for the security of small states, expressed in the Goa Declaration; support of the liberation of Namibia and South Africa. (See Section 5: Working together and page 80: Resources)

On Commonwealth Day

- Display 'mental maps' and pictures and 'priorities for peace' materials.
- Exhibit written and other work on Commonwealth conflict-solving activities.

ACTIVITY 2



Level: Primary/secondary

Learning about discrimination

This activity relates to the Commonwealth principle: *We recognise racial prejudice as a dangerous sickness and racial discrimination as an unmitigated evil.*

The activity is intended as a way into the question of racial discrimination but could also be applied to discrimination on the ground of gender or religion.

ACTIVITY 2: CONTINUED

- 1 The teacher selects one or more arbitrary factors about the children's appearance or circumstances and deliberately discriminates on the basis of these: e.g. all students above (or below) a certain height; all students who were born over 10 miles away; all students who are left-handed.

These students (Group A) are asked to go and sit on one side of the classroom while the other (Group B) move to the other side.

- 2 The teacher then describes a task that the whole class is to do. It should be something that students generally enjoy doing, e.g. some kind of art or craft work, and which requires the use of a number of materials. Each member of Group B is given plenty of materials (paper, several coloured pencils, rulers, rubbers, scraps of cloth, scissors etc) while Group A are given only a few basic things between them and do not have enough to go round. The students should be told that it is up to them to do what they want with the materials given to them (but avoid actually suggesting sharing of materials).

- 3 Half way through the activity the teacher distributes sweets, fruit or cold drinks to Group B and tells Group A to stand up in silence while Group B is eating. The class then resumes the activity.

At the end of the exercise the students should be encouraged to talk about what went on and how they felt:

How did it feel to be discriminated against and was there any good reason for their being picked on?

How did it feel to be in the privileged group?

Was there any sharing of materials a) among Group A? b) between the two groups?

Were some students separated from their friends and did they feel differently towards them when they were in a different group?

- 4 It is important at this stage that Group A is given its share of goodies, previously distributed only to Group B, and that they are thanked for putting up with the various examples of unfairness.

The activity can lead on to a discussion of racial (and other forms of) discrimination in society.

From principle to practice

The Commonwealth's role in opposing racism and apartheid can be highlighted, e.g.

- The Lusaka Declaration on Racism and Racial Prejudice (1979)
- The Gleneagles Agreement banning all sporting contact with South Africa (1977)
- The Kuala Lumpur Statement on Southern Africa (1989) setting up special groups to study and recommend the best ways to help bring an end to apartheid
- The work of the Commonwealth Committee of Foreign Ministers on Southern Africa
- Support for education and training programmes for the deprived majority in South Africa



ACTIVITY 2: CONTINUED

- Imposing economic sanctions against South Africa

The activities and discussion could lead on to written work and art work.

See also Section 5, Working together, and page 80: Resources.

Racism attacks the very foundations of the Commonwealth, because the contemporary Commonwealth is rooted in the modern movement to end colonialism and the divisive notion of superior and inferior human racial groups... The ideology and practice of apartheid are therefore the antithesis of the Commonwealth's most fundamental aims.

from *Racism in Southern Africa: the Commonwealth Stand*,
Commonwealth Secretariat

On Commonwealth Day

- Display essays, art work, charts on Commonwealth action against apartheid.
- Make up a play about racial prejudice, based on the discrimination exercise above.

ACTIVITY 3



Level: Secondary

Fair shares for all?

This activity relates to the Commonwealth principle: *We believe that the wide disparities in wealth now existing between different sections of mankind are too great to be tolerated.*

Thinking about disparities

First ask the students to think about what is meant by 'wide disparities in wealth'. What things do some people have in excess while other people are denied even their basic needs? Ask for ideas from the students and make a list on the blackboard. It could be divided into two columns to show the extremes of wealth and poverty. Encourage the student to think not just of property but also of rights, access to education, health, political decision-making etc.

Discussion on the causes of poverty

The list can then be used as a starting point for a discussion about the reasons for such unequal distribution of wealth and power. What kinds of people possess wealth? Who controls the economy? What causes poverty? It is important to look both at inequalities in the students' own societies and in the world generally. What connections are there between the industrialised countries and the rich and powerful in developing countries? What about the links and common ground between workers/ unemployed people in 'developed countries' and those in the 'Third World'.

ACTIVITY 3: CONTINUED

Role play

Explore the theme through role-play. Take, for example, the situation of a country dependent on a single cash-crop such as sugar. A realistic scenario could be that world sugar prices are falling and, because of drought, the sugar crop is in danger of failing. The multi-national companies may withdraw their investment in favour of European sugar beet. Living and working conditions for the plantation workers are deteriorating. The Ministry of Economic Planning would like to diversify the economy but the International Monetary Fund (IMF) will only supply the loan needed for this project if the country agrees to devalue its currency, a step it is reluctant to take because of the further hardship that would be caused. Other factors can be added to the basic scenario e.g. a women's organisation campaigning for fairer wages and better conditions – the 'story' can be developed according to the students' own ideas or experience.

Students act the parts of plantation workers, plantation owner, government officials etc., either working out dialogues between the various people, as appropriate, or being interviewed by another group of students who play the part of 'journalists' covering the story for national or regional newspapers.

Afterwards it is important for students to discuss how they felt in the roles they played and what they have learnt about the causes of economic hardship.

From principle to practice

As with the previous activities, there could be a follow-up study of the Commonwealth's role in working towards a fairer world economy, e.g:

- The New Delhi Statement on Economic Action
- Former Secretary-General Shridath Ramphal's membership of the Brandt, Brundtland and Palme Commissions
- The work of the Economic Affairs Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat
- The preparing of reports on protectionism, debt, North-South dialogue etc. (See Resources, page 80.)

On Commonwealth Day

- Develop the role-play exercise into a play to perform to the rest of the school and to visitors.
- Hold a debate on inequalities within the Commonwealth.

ACTIVITY 4

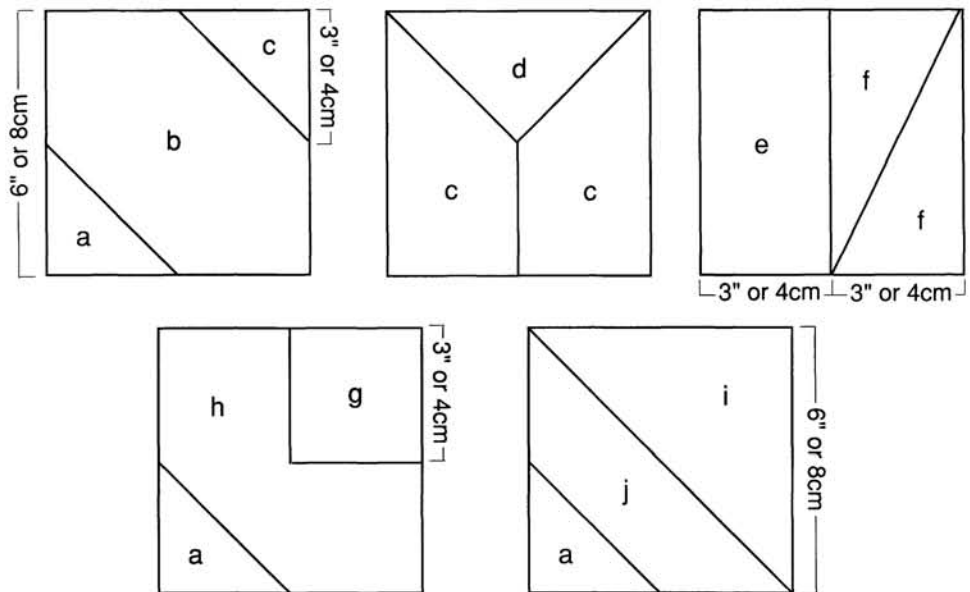


Co-operation squares

This activity relates to the Commonwealth principle: *We believe that international co-operation is essential.*

The game places participants in a conflict situation which cannot end until each group co-operates.

- 1 Before class prepare a set of squares for each group of five children. (A set consists of five envelopes containing pieces of stiff paper cut into patterns that will form five 8cm x 8cm squares as below.)



Several individual combinations will be possible but only one total combination.

- 2 Cut the squares into parts **a** to **j** and lightly pencil in the letters. Then mark the envelopes **A** to **E** and distribute the pieces thus:

envelope **A** – pieces **a**, **c**, **h**, **i**

envelope **B** – pieces **a**, **a**, **a**, **e**

envelope **C** – piece **j** only

envelope **D** – pieces **d** and **f**

envelope **E** – pieces **b**, **c**, **f**, **g**.

Erase the small letters from the pieces and write instead the envelope letters **A** to **E** so that the pieces can be easily returned for re-use.

- 3 Divide the class into groups of five and seat each group at a table. Give each group member an envelope and ask that the envelope be opened only on a signal.
- 4 Describe the game as a puzzle involving conflict and co-operation. Read the instructions aloud and give the signal to open the envelopes. The instructions are as follows:

'Each person has an envelope containing pieces for forming squares. At the signal, the task of the group is to form five squares of equal size. The task is not completed until everyone has before him or her a perfect square, and all the squares are of the same size.

ACTIVITY 4: CONTINUED

During the game no member may speak. No member may communicate in any way - by smiles, hand-signals, longing glances etc. No member may take a puzzle piece from anyone else. Members may give puzzle pieces to others. Some class members should be observers. As groups finish allow them to observe other groups – silently.'

- 5 It will usually take about 20 minutes for all groups to finish. You should spend at least as much time discussing the game as you spend playing it.

The following questions might be helpful in provoking discussion:

- How did you feel?
- How did the holder of envelope C feel?
- Did anyone notice that C had only one piece?
- How did you feel when someone held a piece and did not see the solution?
- Why did you take all the pieces?
- What was your reaction when someone finished a square and then sat back without seeing if that solution prevented others from solving the problem?
- Were you afraid you would look foolish because you couldn't see a solution?
- What were your feelings if you finished your square and then began to realise you would have to break it up and give away a piece?
- How did you feel about a person who did not follow directions?
- How did you feel about a person who was slow at seeing the solution or who misunderstood the instructions?
- What processes enabled some groups to finish quickly? Did you follow the instructions? If not, how do you feel? Satisfied? Angry?

Obviously this game is geared to older children, but an enterprising teacher could adapt it for a younger age group.

From principle to practice

After this activity the theme of co-operation can be looked at within the context of Commonwealth affairs. The whole of Section 5, Working together, is concerned with examples of practical co-operation at the international, regional and local level.