# Understanding Politics — Chapter 16 Student Practice Pack

*Democracy, War and Peace*

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## About this pack

This final pack combines a short reading worksheet on Kant with a dyad-coding exercise testing the democratic peace on contested historical cases. Answers are in the Instructor Pack, available to teaching staff from www.oxterpress.com. Student Pack, Chapter 16, version 1.0 (October 2026). © Oxter Press. CC BY-NC 4.0.

**Text note.** Kant is cited by Academy pagination (for example 8:349), which appears in the margins of most modern editions. Read *Toward Perpetual Peace* in full: it is short.

## Chapter at a glance

| Explanation of the democratic peace | Mechanism | Key sources |
|---|---|---|
| Institutional | Leaders accountable to those who bear war's costs | Kant; Bueno de Mesquita et al. (1999) |
| Normative | Shared norms of peaceful compromise | Doyle (1983); Maoz and Russett (1993) |
| Informational | Public threats are credible because backing down is costly | Fearon (1994) |
| Commercial | Trade and markets raise the costs of war | Russett and Oneal (2001); Gartzke (2007) |
| Sceptical | Alliances, territory or definitions explain the pattern | Gowa (1999); Gibler (2007); Rosato (2003) |

## Reading worksheet: Kant's argument

Read the three definitive articles and the passage on citizens' consent to war (8:349–8:360).

1. The first article requires every state's constitution to be 'republican'. What does Kant mean by a republic, and why does he distinguish it from democracy?
2. Kant argues that citizens who must bear war's costs will be hesitant to begin it (8:351). Does this predict peace between republics only, or restraint in general?

3. What do the second article (a federation of free states) and the third (cosmopolitan right limited to hospitality) add?
4. How does Doyle use the three articles to explain why the peace is dyadic?

## Exercise: coding contested dyads

For each case, record the regime type of both sides at the time using V-Dem's Regimes of the World or Polity5 (or both), and judge whether the case challenges the democratic peace.

| Case | Side A (regime type, source) | Side B (regime type, source) | Did they fight a war (1,000+ battle deaths)? | Challenge to the democratic peace? Why? |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Spanish–American War, 1898 | | | | |
| Fashoda crisis, 1898 (Britain and France) | | | | |
| Finland and Britain, 1941–1944 | | | | |
| Falklands War, 1982 | | | | |
| Kargil conflict, 1999 (India and Pakistan) | | | | |
| Cod Wars, 1958–1976 (Iceland and Britain) | | | | |

Then answer (400 words): (1) How many cases turn on the definition of democracy and how many on the definition of war? (2) Do your codings support the dyadic claim, the monadic claim, neither or both? (3) Which explanation in the table above best accounts for the near-misses such as Fashoda and the Cod Wars?

## Self-test

1. The Correlates of War project defines interstate war by a threshold of:
    - A. 100 battle deaths
    - B. A formal declaration
    - C. One year of fighting
    - D. 1,000 battle-related deaths
2. The dyadic claim holds that:
    - A. Democracies never fight
    - B. Democracies rarely fight each other
    - C. Democracies win their wars
    - D. Autocracies are peaceful
3. Levy described the absence of war between democracies as:

- A. As close as anything to an empirical law in international relations
- B. A statistical accident
- C. A Cold War artefact
- D. Unproven

4. Kant’s first definitive article requires that:
   - A. All states be democracies
   - B. States join a world government
   - C. The civil constitution in every state be republican
   - D. Standing armies be abolished
5. Kant’s republic is defined by:
   - A. Universal suffrage
   - B. Absence of a monarch
   - C. Direct democracy
   - D. Representation and separation of executive from legislative power
6. Maoz and Russett found support for:
   - A. Neither explanation
   - B. Both normative and structural explanations, somewhat more for normative
   - C. Only structural
   - D. Only economic
7. Bueno de Mesquita and colleagues argue that leaders with large winning coalitions:
   - A. Choose wars carefully and fight hard once committed
   - B. Avoid all wars
   - C. Lose more wars
   - D. Ignore public opinion
8. Fearon’s audience costs make democratic threats:
   - A. Less credible
   - B. Irrelevant
   - C. More credible, because backing down is costly
   - D. Secret
9. Gartzke’s ‘capitalist peace’ argues that:
   - A. Capitalism causes war
   - B. Democracy alone explains peace
   - C. Trade is irrelevant
   - D. Market development and shared interests explain much of the democratic peace
10. Gowa argues that post-1945 peace among democracies reflects:
    - A. Common alignment against the Soviet Union
    - B. Shared culture
    - C. Nuclear weapons only
    - D. International law
11. Gibler’s ‘territorial peace’ holds that:
    - A. Large states are peaceful
    - B. Islands avoid war
    - C. Settled borders favour both democracy and peace

- D. Territory is irrelevant

12. Mansfield and Snyder found that states early in democratisation:
    - A. Are the most peaceful
    - B. Are more likely to become involved in war, especially in incomplete transitions
    - C. Never fight
    - D. Always join alliances
13. Downes and Lilley show that democracies have:
    - A. Never intervened abroad
    - B. Only fought autocracies
    - C. Always respected elections abroad
    - D. Used covert action against elected governments
14. Rosato argues that the democratic peace's causal mechanisms:
    - A. Do not hold up under historical scrutiny
    - B. Are fully confirmed
    - C. Apply only to Europe
    - D. Are economic
15. Russett and Oneal found conflict reduced independently by:
    - A. Democracy alone
    - B. Trade alone
    - C. Democracy, trade and shared membership of international organisations
    - D. Alliances alone

## Short answers and essays

**Short answers:** (1) Dyadic versus monadic claims. (2) Kant's three definitive articles. (3) Institutional versus normative explanations. (4) Audience costs. (5) The capitalist peace. (6) The territorial peace. (7) Covert action and the democratic peace. (8) War during democratisation. (9) Coding problems: what counts as democracy and as war? (10) Policy implications of the democratic peace.

**Essays:** (1) Is the democratic peace an empirical law? (2) Did Kant predict the democratic peace? (3) Is the peace democratic, capitalist or territorial? (4) Should spreading democracy be a goal of foreign policy? (5) Does the democratic peace survive the record of covert intervention? (6) Are democratising states dangerous?

## Glossary

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Dyad | A pair of states analysed together |
| Democratic peace | Rarity of war between democracies |
| Monadic claim | Democracies are generally less war-prone |
| Audience costs | Domestic penalties for backing down after public threats |

| Term | Definition |
|---|---|
| Capitalist peace | Peace explained by markets and shared interests |
| Territorial peace | Peace explained by settled borders |
| Republic (Kant) | Representation and separation of powers |