

# the pencil Game

## Getting an education while living in conflict

### Equipment required:

Bell (to ring at beginning/end of school day)  
One template of pencil per group/'class'  
One template of bullet per group/'class'  
Sheets of paper (can use newspaper, A4 paper) 20 sheets per class/50 sheets in central stores  
Two pairs of scissors per group/'class'  
One black pen per group/'class'

One red pen per group/'class'

Two pencils per group/'class'

Two black pens, two red pens and two pencils in central stores

### Aim of the game:

The aim of the game is to get a good education (primary and secondary school) for each person playing the game.

In order to show that you are getting an education you need to make pencils out of paper (template attached).

The pencils must be cut out of paper, the tips coloured in with a black pen and the words 'rewrite the future' written on the pencil in red.

The more pencils you make, the greater the level of education you have received.

20 pencils – primary school education for one person  
40 pencils – secondary school education for one person  
70 pencils – further education for one person  
100 pencils – university education for one person

### Timing of the game:

10 minutes to introduce the game  
30 minutes to play the game  
20 minutes for debriefing

### Setting up the game:

Divide the group into 'classes' of three to six people. Each class will need a pencil case with two pairs of scissors, a pencil, a ruler, a red and a black pen, 20 sheets of paper and a pencil template. To get more paper you can go to the central stores (a teacher/young person will be in charge of the stores, with 50 sheets of spare paper, two black pens, two red pens and two pencils).

Set classes up around a table. Show them the area where the central stores are located.

Each day in the life of the school will be three minutes so you will be at school for two weeks. Explain that the bell will go off after every three minutes and all work should cease at this time. The class should wait for further instructions and the bell to signal the beginning of the next school day.

Explain to the groups that when they have made 20 pencils per person they should put up their hand to show that their class has been educated and they can move on to the next level of their education.

The teacher/leader is there to enforce rules, and ensure there is no cheating or stealing.

Give supplies out from the central stores, one item per class per round, as the game will play better if it is more difficult to be able to make pencils. Even when the central stores are empty you will have to give paper out as the game will become boring if there is no paper available (but give out one sheet at a time).



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### **First 3 minutes**

*(normal school day)*

Allow the classes to get started on their task and begin to make pencils.

### **3 to 6 minutes**

*(Explain due to curfew – they have to remain in their house)*

At the beginning of this round explain that conflict has broken out in your country – there is now a curfew so you are unable to make pencils. You are stuck in your house and unable to attend school.

### **6 to 9 minutes**

*(Empty central stores)*

Due to the conflict, transport has been disrupted and supplies can no longer get to the school. The central stores are empty. The class can make pencils but they may run out of paper. This can still be provided but only a piece at a time (it needs to be difficult to make pencils).

### **9 to 12 minutes**

*(Soldiers to remove equipment from classes)*

There has been a coup and a new government is in charge. Soldiers have set up their barracks in the school and have taken some of your equipment to use for their own supplies.

### **12 to 15 minutes**

*(Give classes new template for bullet)*

Soldiers need more bullets and have conscripted you to make them – stop making pencils and make bullets for the soldiers. There is plenty of paper for this activity. Make sure the bullets are finished before starting a new round.

### **15 to 18 minutes**

*(Take tables from the children)*

The soldiers needed firewood and have burned all of the tables – you can no longer sit at a table as you don't have them. Good news though – you can have your education again and can make

pencils instead of bullets.

### **18 to 21 minutes**

*(only half the class can participate)*

The school is unsafe as fighting has started to occur close to the school so half of your class has to look out for bullets, bombs, etc. Only half the group can make pencils, the others need to stand and look out for bombs and bullets.

### **21 to 24 minutes**

*(if possible take the children outside as the school building has been destroyed)*

The school building has been destroyed by fighting. You need to find somewhere else to go to make your pencils.

### **24 to 27 minutes**

*(under curfew – only one person in the class can take the materials)*

It is now too dangerous to leave your home and go to school. You can make pencils but you have to do it at home so only one person in the group can take the materials to use them and make pencils. The others cannot make pencils as they do not have any equipment.

### **27 to 30 minutes**

*(return tables and equipment to classes)*

The conflict has finished and the government has provided a tent, tables and equipment that were taken by the soldiers.

Spend some time talking about the activity with the children. Some people can become quite involved in the activity and it is important to share some of the frustrations that they may have felt. Here are some examples of debriefing questions:

How much education did you get?

What did it feel like to go to school in a conflict situation?

What did you wish for when you were in the conflict situation?

What was the worst thing that happened to you?

What would make the situation better?

How important is education to children?

Why is it important?



# Taking Action

## what would you wish for?

Imagine that you are a child who is not being educated due to conflict – how would you feel? Why not invite your local MP to an awareness-raising event? You could hold a lesson outside – many children do not have school buildings so have to learn under trees instead. Children may come up with some other ideas for where to hold a lesson or meeting after playing the pencil game.

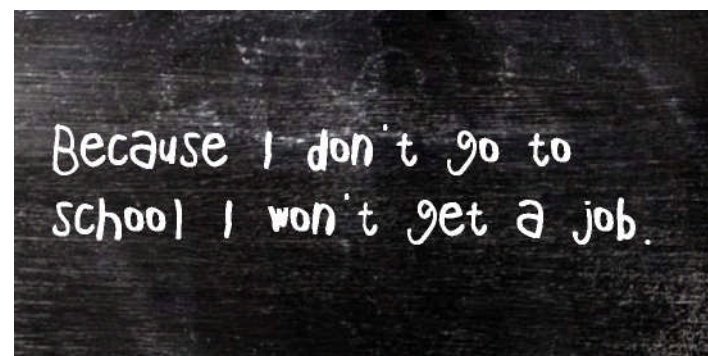
Give your MP messages of support for Save the Children's Rewrite the Future challenge and ask him or her to take those messages to Parliament.

Save the Children's Rewrite the Future challenge is about getting an education for the millions of out-of-school children who are living in conflict-affected countries.

Ask each child to create a message of support for the campaign using a black piece of paper with a white pen or crayon (symbolising chalk on a blackboard).

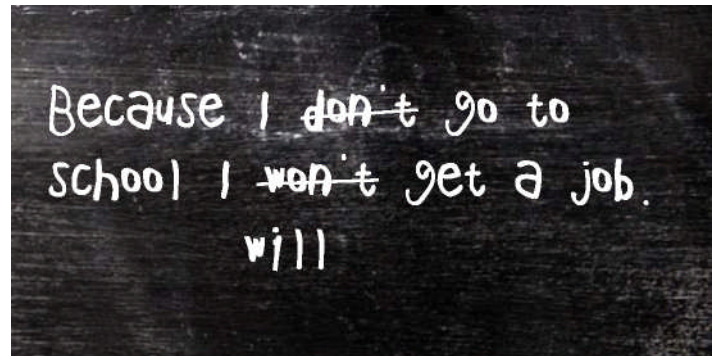
The message would signal a negative consequence for children, such as:

Because I don't go to school I won't get a job.



The negative words are then crossed out and positive words put in their place to show that by supporting this campaign, children's futures are being rewritten.

e.g. Because I don't go to school I won't will get a job



Collect all the children's messages together and hand them to the MP.

This is a great opportunity for children in your school/group to get actively involved in the challenge by meeting their MP.



**Save the Children**

These are the templates for the pencil game activity. You will need one template per group/class. You may want to put these onto card so they are easier to draw around.

