Introduction:

It's often good policy to work out disputes with an opponent by negotiation or compromise. In the American legal system, settlements are reached frequently without going to trial. Many schools also provide "peer mediation" services in which students help each other settle issues and arguments. However, at times compromise can be a dangerous tactic. A good example of this occurred with the 1938 Munich Pact, when British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and French Premier Edouard Daladier gave in to the demands of Nazi Dictator Adolf Hitler in order to avoid war. They ceded a portion of Czechoslovakia called the Sudetenland to Germany in the hope that Hitler would not demand further territory. However, they were wrong: a few weeks later Hitler seized the rest of Czechoslovakia, then signed a non-aggression treaty with the Soviet Union. On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland, and Britain and France responded by declaring war. World War II had begun.

Directions:

"Peace for Our Time"
Go to [http://library.byu.edu/~rdh/eurodocs/uk/peace.html](http://library.byu.edu/~rdh/eurodocs/uk/peace.html) and read the remarks of Prime Minister Chamberlain as he returned from Munich. Answer the following questions.

1. As he disembarked from the plane, Chamberlain said that "the method of consultation" would be used to deal with other questions that involved England and Germany. What do you think he meant by this?

2. Chamberlain goes on to say "we are determined to continue our efforts to remove possible sources of difference, and thus to contribute to assure the peace of Europe." Speculate on what sources of difference Chamberlain may have envisioned.

3. Chamberlain concludes by stating he "believes (the agreement) is peace for our time." Do you believe Chamberlain was overly optimistic, or that he had legitimate reason to believe that Hitler would follow the agreement? Explain your answer.
The British Parliamentary Debate on the Munich Agreement

Next, go to http://138.110.28.9/acad/intrel/munich.htm and read Winston Churchill’s speech from the Parliamentary debate on the Munich agreement. (Note: it will be necessary to scroll down the page to find Churchill’s speech.) Answer the following questions:

4. In the opening paragraph, Churchill states bluntly, “we have sustained a total and unmitigated defeat, and that France has suffered even more than we have.” Later in the speech, he notes, “we are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude…” Do you think this statement was based on military or political facts, or was it partisan rhetoric said as a member of the opposition party? In a few sentences, defend your position.

5. At various parts of Churchill’s speech, Viscountess Astor, who makes comments such as “Nonsense,” and “Rude,” interrupts him. Do you think members of the U.S. Congress would interrupt one another and say similar things during debate over a bill or treaty? Why or why not?

6. In other remarks, Churchill notes that with the Munich agreement “Britain and France had to choose between war and dishonor. They chose dishonor. They will have war.” Based on what you have read in the Parliamentary debates, do you think Churchill’s view was a popular view? Speculate on what political risks Churchill might have faced by making such statements.

7. Note that no representatives from the Czech government nor from the Soviet government were present at the Munich conference, nor did they sign the documents giving the Sudetenland to Germany. Do you believe it was fair for Britain and France to decide the future of Czechoslovakia without giving the Czechs a voice in the negotiations? Since it bordered Czechoslovakia, should the Soviet Union have been included in the talks? Write a “point-counterpoint” article discussing both sides of this issue. Be sure to include your own opinion as to whether the process was fair.