This chapter discusses the various methods available for the peaceful settlement of international disputes. These include diplomatic methods (negotiation, mediation, inquiry, and conciliation), and legal methods (arbitration, the International Court of Justice, other courts and tribunals, and the place of legal methods). The role of the United Nations and regional organizations is also considered.

Discussion covers the role of international law and its place in international relations, and dispute settlement generally. The text is illustrated with analysis of current and past disputes in which the various methods have been used—either successfully or unsuccessfully. The historical record shows first, that over the last two hundred years huge progress has been made in developing and refining the methods for handling international disputes, and secondly, that despite, or perhaps because of, differences between the various methods, their interaction and use in combination are often important factors in determining their effectiveness in practice.