

## Planning Overview

Classroom Deliberation:

### What is the best approach to US foreign policy in the 21st century?

**TEACHER NOTE:** to use this resource in your classroom - click 'file' and then click 'make a copy' to create your own Google Doc version to edit as needed and share with your students.

## Introduction

The United States' role in the world has been a source of debate throughout the nation's history. As the US has experienced growth and development in its global influence, unparalleled economic gains, and dramatic shifts in both immigration and social movements, citizens have argued over how the US should act internationally. As we move deeper into the 21st century, people continue to disagree about whether the major source of US influence in the world should be its moral example or its active involvement. This deliberation addresses the following question: What is the best approach to US foreign policy in the 21st century?

## Objectives and Outcomes

- Students will explore past and present American foreign policy commitments and its history of involvement since the 20th century
- Students will evaluate the various arguments regarding the US role in the world, including the goals and benefits of each argument

## Lesson Plans

Pick and choose from the following strategies to engage your students in the issue.

1. **Warm-Up Activity.** Choose from one of the following strategies to activate prior knowledge and engage your students.
  - a. **A/B writing.** Write the following statements on the board. Instruct students to choose the statement with which they most agree and then free write for two minutes explaining why they support that statement. Allow several students, at least one for each statement, to share their thinking with the class.
    - i. American foreign policy should prioritize American interests.
    - ii. Supporting global interests help American interests.
  - b. **Think-Pair-Share.** Write the prompt on the board: “**To What Extent Should the United States Become Involved in Global Agreements and Global Conflicts?** ” Have students

silently write down their thoughts and then discuss them with a partner. Give several pairs an opportunity to share their examples.

- c. **Take a Stand.** Present students with the statement: “**The United States Needs to be Actively Engaged in Pursuing the Interests of the Global Community.**” Have students line up on a continuum based on their opinion from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree.” Ask several students from different points on the line to share their reasoning and defend their position.
2. **Vocabulary Preview.** Before watching the videos, reading the background articles, and using the additional resources, have students define the terms on the Vocabulary Preview Chart. This could be done as a jigsaw or individually, and depending on available time it may be completed for homework or in class.
3. **Background knowledge.** Have students read the background articles, watch the background videos, and complete the accompanying background questions and/or use the note-taking chart. Depending on available time, this may be done in class or for homework. Additionally, students should look for references to the vocabulary terms, and write quotes of the terms being used on the Vocabulary Preview Chart.
4. **Deliberate.** Have students watch the videos advocating for the different policy approaches. While watching the videos, students should complete the note-taking chart for each side’s argument. Then, choose one of the activities from the Deliberations website to engage your students.
5. **Assess.** In addition to engaging in the Deliberation activity above, you may choose to have students complete an independent assignment to assess their mastery of the topic.
  - a. Have students write a paper exploring and taking a position on either the Bush Doctrine, Obama Doctrine, or Trump Doctrine philosophies in the context of some or all of the following aspects of foreign policy: trade, tariffs, military commitments, environmental accords, humanitarian intervention
  - b. Have students, acting as though they were legislative aides, write a policy memo to their Representative or Senator summarizing their views on US foreign policy approach, identifying both its general pros and cons and its specific impact on their Congressional district or state, and making a recommendation as to whether their Congressman should support or oppose their approach and why.
6. **Extension.**
  - **In the Context of History:** Identify the causes and effects of isolationist foreign policy approaches in previous periods of US History and make predictions about potential outcomes of the Trump Doctrine.
  - **Assessing the US Role through Photography/Political Cartoons:** Have students share their perspectives on the global role of the US through a series of political cartoons or photojournalism. Have students create a gallery walk in your classroom to visually support their argument, and give students the chance to interact with the images.
  - **America First, Then and Now:** Compare and contrast the [text of President Trump’s America First Speech at Davos in January 2018](#) (CNN) with [then-Senator Warren G.](#)

[Harding's January 1920 speech regarding ratification of the Treaty of Versailles](#) (Miller Center).

- **The Theatre of International Commitment:** Have students conceptualize and produce a Playbill cover and inside title page for a Broadway musical that either supports or opposes an America First approach (depending on their position on the issue). The Playbill should indicate: a show title, key members of the “cast” and “production staff,” and several scenes and song titles.
- **We Are Never, Ever Getting Back Together...Or Are We?:** Working in pairs, students write a “breakup letter” from President Trump to an international alliance, trade partner, treaty partners, or nation presently receiving humanitarian aid reflecting and then either a response letter from the recipient or a follow-up letter from a future US President seeking to rekindle the relationship. Each letter should be accompanied by a “breakup/makeup playlist” of 8-10 songs, with explanations for why each was picked to accompany the letter.