



U.S. FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY

SS.7.CG.4.1 Explain the relationship between U.S. foreign and domestic policy.

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2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES

- Updated from SS.7.C.4.1
 - Changed from “~~Differentiate concepts related to~~ U.S. domestic and foreign policy.” to “Explain the relationship between U.S. foreign and domestic policy.”
- Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark
 - Changed from “Differentiate” to “Explain”
- Benchmark Clarification Changes
 - Addition of “Students will define ‘national interest’ and identify the means available to the national government to pursue the United States’ national interest.”
 - Deletion of “Students will analyze the domestic implications of U.S. domestic and foreign policy.”
 - Deletion of “Students will identify the goals and objectives of U.S. domestic and foreign policy.”
 - Deletion of “Students will recognize the role of the U.S. State Department in foreign affairs.”
- Vocabulary Changes
 - Addition of “national interest”

Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

This section addresses the following topics:

1. Defining “National Interest”
2. Explaining Foreign and Domestic Policy
3. Foreign and Domestic Policy in the Constitution
4. How the United States Pursues its National Interest Abroad
5. The Role of the Cabinet and Executive Departments

1. Defining “National Interest”

The term “national interest” refers to the set of priorities, goals, and principles that are vital to the security, prosperity, and general welfare of the United States both at home and abroad.

The national interest of the United States includes: ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the American people, our U.S. territories, and our allies; promoting economic stability and growth at home and abroad; maintaining political stability at home and abroad; ensuring stable and reliable sources of energy as well as reducing dependence on foreign energy sources; building and maintaining strong alliances and trade partnerships with other nations to promote stability, democracy, and the rule of law; maintaining the United States’ global leadership status in order to promote a world order that aligns with its values and interests.

While the emphasis the U.S. places on various aspects of our national interest can change over time in response to the priorities of different presidential administrations and/or changing circumstances both at home and abroad, what is viewed as in our “national interest” ultimately reflects our founding principles and the will of the American people as expressed through their collective votes.

2. Explaining Foreign and Domestic Policy

The United States pursues its national interest through both foreign and domestic policy. Domestic policy refers to policies on topics such as health care, education, civil rights, economic issues, and social issues. These are topics that primarily impact citizen and non-citizen behavior inside the United States. Foreign policy, on the other hand, focuses on the United States’ relationship with other nations (i.e. international relations), and the factors affecting those relationships. Foreign policy is anchored in diplomacy, which takes place under the purview of the Secretary of State (a Cabinet-level position that oversees the Department of State).

Foreign policy and domestic policy are often related and impact one another, even if they are made specifically within the domestic or foreign policy realm. For example, Congress’ power to raise and support armies outlined in Article I, Section 8, is related to international relations. The greater the threat from foreign enemies, the more likely it is that Congress will increase military spending, and vice versa. In the 1990s, for instance, overall military spending declined after the fall of Communism in Europe as more nations became democracies. Conversely, certain domestic policy areas impact other nations directly and/or indirectly. For instance, federal and state environmental policies affect air and water quality in the U.S. as well as in other nations. Likewise, domestic policies relating to naturalization affect migration and immigration patterns.

3. Foreign and Domestic Policy in the Constitution

The power to set foreign and domestic policy is broadly shared, under Articles I and II of the U.S. Constitution. Both articles provide instruction to the legislative and executive branches in terms of the areas of policy for which they are responsible. Article I, Section 8 outlines policy areas with Congress' purview:

*The Congress shall have Power To lay and collect Taxes, Duties, Imposts and Excises, to pay the Debts and provide for the common Defense and general Welfare of the United States; but all Duties, Imposts and Excises shall be uniform throughout the United States;
To borrow money on the credit of the United States;
To regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes;
To establish an uniform Rule of Naturalization, and uniform Laws on the subject of Bankruptcies throughout the United States;
To define and punish Piracies and Felonies committed on the high Seas, and Offenses against the Law of Nations;
To declare War, grant Letters of Marque and Reprisal, and make Rules concerning Captures on Land and Water;
To raise and support Armies, but no Appropriation of Money to that Use shall be for a longer Term than two Years;
To provide and maintain a Navy;
To make Rules for the Government and Regulation of the land and naval Forces;
To provide for calling forth the Militia to execute the Laws of the Union, suppress Insurrections and repel Invasions;
To make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution the foregoing Powers, and all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.*

This last clause is called the “necessary and proper” or “elastic” clause. This clause enables Congress to take whatever actions that it believes needs to be taken in representing the needs of the American people and fulfilling its duties under the Constitution. Most public policy today emerges from the elastic clause, because these policy concerns were not anticipated by the Framers.

On the other hand, Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution specifies:

The President shall be Commander in Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, and of the Militia of the several States, when called into the actual Service of the United States; he may require the Opinion, in writing, of the principal Officer in each of the executive Departments, upon any subject relating to the Duties of their respective Offices, and he shall have Power to grant Reprieves and Pardons for Offenses against the United States, except in Cases of Impeachment.

He shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur; and he shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers and Consuls, Judges of the supreme Court, and all other Officers of the United States, whose Appointments are not herein otherwise provided for, and which shall be established by Law: but the Congress may by Law vest the Appointment of such inferior Officers, as they think proper, in the President alone, in the Courts of Law, or in the Heads of Departments.

Together, this demonstrates that although the Constitution provides that most key decisions are legislated by one or both houses of Congress, the executive is given wide latitude to weigh in on and help set both foreign and domestic policy.

4. How the United States Pursues its National Interest Abroad

At the foundation of any nation's foreign policy is a clear sense of its national interests. As the United States works to pursue its national interest, it will inevitably face foreign policy challenges along the way. There are three primary means the U.S. (and other nations) can employ in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives:

- A. Foreign Aid: Aid is used to provide help or assistance to other countries in need. Aid does not always have to be monetary. Some examples include but are not limited to: money, soldiers in a peacekeeping role, food, water, medical care, and/or advice and support on how to establish and/or maintain a democratic form of government. Foreign aid usually, but not solely, comes under the auspices of the Department of State.
- B. Military Action: Action can be taken for the purpose of protecting the nation from attack, or protecting our citizens, vital interests, and/or allies abroad. Military action typically comes through use of one or more of seven military branches under the Department of Defense and/or Department of Homeland Security: the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard, and/or National Guard.
- C. Treaties and Executive Agreements: Treaties are formal agreements between countries to end wars or set new international laws, policies, and/or norms. Examples include the Treaty of Versailles (1919); the Paris Peace Treaty (1947); the North American Free Trade Agreement (1994). While the president typically negotiates a treaty, the Constitution stipulates that treaties must be ratified by the U.S. Senate. Oftentimes, when accomplishing foreign policy objectives, formal treaties will not be used. Instead, presidents, acting in their role as head of state, will simply enter executive agreements with heads of state from other nations. In addition, to pursue its national interest, the United States will often act as a mediator, and help other disputing nations agree to treaty terms. One example of this would be the U.S. role in facilitating the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt in 1978.

5. The Role of the Cabinet and Executive Departments

Implementation of most foreign and domestic policy, falls to executive departments and independent agencies. Expanding the original four Cabinet departments, created under the administration of George Washington, additional Cabinet and executive departments have been established by acts of Congress to meet the nation's evolving needs and priorities.

Each Cabinet department is headed by a secretary appointed by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The Cabinet and executive departments both oversee implementation of the nation's policy agenda as well as advise the president on various foreign and domestic policy issues.

The table below represents a complete list of all current (2023) Cabinet departments in the order that they were created:

Department Name	Year Created	Notes
State	1789	Originally named Department of Foreign Affairs in July 1789; renamed Department of State in September of that year. Thomas Jefferson was the first Secretary of State.
Treasury	1789	Alexander Hamilton served as the first Secretary of the Treasury.
War	1789	Originally oversaw the Army. Restructured after World War II to include the Department of the Navy (est. 1798) and the Department of the Air Force (est. 1947) and renamed the Department of Defense (1947).
Justice	1789	Originally established as the Office of Attorney General as a single person to provide legal opinions to the president. Restructured in 1870 to have authority over U.S. Attorneys and the administration of law.
Interior	1849	Created in 1849 to deal with the internal development of the nation and the welfare of its people.
Agriculture	1862	Provides leadership on food, agriculture, natural resources, rural development, nutrition, and issues based on public policy, the best available science, and effective management.
Commerce	1903	Originally the Department of Labor and Commerce, renamed the Department of Commerce when the separate Department of Labor was created in 1913.
Labor	1913	Created in 1913. Notable for the tenure of Frances Perkins, the first female Cabinet secretary as Secretary of Labor under Franklin Roosevelt (1933-1945).
Health and Human Services	1953	Originally established as the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; renamed in 1979 when the separate Department of Education was created.
Housing and Urban Development	1965	Created in 1965 to administer federal housing and urban development laws.
Transportation	1966	Created in 1966 to ensure a fast, safe, efficient, accessible, and convenient transportation system to benefit the quality of life for the American people.
Energy	1977	Established under the Carter administration to respond to the 1970s energy crisis.
Education	1979	See Department of Health, Education and Welfare above; has the smallest budget of all Cabinet-level departments.
Veterans Affairs	1988	First formed as the Veterans Administration in 1930; elevated to Cabinet-level status in 1988.
Homeland Security	2003	Created in response to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States to reorganize several federal agencies into one department.

Additionally, several other positions and offices within the executive branch hold Cabinet-level rank, even though they are not connected to Cabinet-level departments. These include (as of 2023): the

Vice-President, the White House Chief of Staff, the Ambassador to the United Nations, the Director of National Intelligence, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the U.S. Trade Representative.

Sources: https://1997-2001.state.gov/global/general_foreign_policy/00_perf_1.pdf;
<https://2009-2017.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/perfprpt/2002/html/18996.htm>; <https://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/cabinet/>

Lesson Summary

ESSENTIAL QUESTION		
What is the relationship between foreign and domestic policy? How does the United States government pursue our national interest through policy?		
BENCHMARK		
SS.7.CG.4.1 Explain the relationship between U.S. foreign and domestic policy.		
CIVICS EOC REPORTING CATEGORY		
N/A		
OVERVIEW		
In this lesson, students will explain the difference between U.S. foreign and domestic policy and be able to identify the means available to the national government to pursue the United States' national interest.		
BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will recognize the difference between domestic and foreign policy. Students will identify issues that relate to U.S. domestic and foreign policy. Students will define “national interest” and identify the means available to the national government to pursue the United States’ national interest. 		
BENCHMARK CONTENT LIMITS		
N/A		
CIVICS CONTENT VOCABULARY		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> alliances, allies, ambassador, cabinet, diplomacy, diplomat, doctrine, domestic, domestic affairs, domestic policy, embassy, executive agreement, foreign, foreign affairs, foreign policy, international relations, national interest, treaty 		
INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES		
Close reading of complex text	Cooperative learning	Scenarios
MATERIALS		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foreign vs. Domestic Policy Sorting Cards Plastic zip bags (optional) Foreign and Domestic Policy Packet Foreign and Domestic Policy Definitions slides Foreign and Domestic Policy Intro reading Domestic Policy Summary video (external link; optional) What is Foreign Policy? video (external link; optional) 		

- The Cabinet Placards
- Folders (optional)
- Day 2 Ticket Out The Door half-sheet
- Voting Cards
- Vocabulary Concept Circles slides
- Methods for Pursuing National Interest reading
- Foreign Policy Scenarios slides

B.E.S.T. STANDARDS

- ELA.7.R.2.1- Explain how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose in texts.
- ELA.7.C.2.1- Present information orally, in a logical sequence, emphasizing key points that support the central idea.
- ELA.7.C.4.1- Conduct research to answer a question, drawing on multiple reliable and valid sources, and generating additional questions for further research.
- ELA.V.1.3- Apply knowledge of context clues, figurative language, word relationships, reference materials, and/or background knowledge to determine the connotative and denotative meaning of words and phrases, appropriate to grade level.

Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

DAY	ACTIVITY SEQUENCE
DAY 1	<p>Planning Note: Before class, copy and cut out the “Foreign vs. Domestic Policy Sorting Cards” and place sets in plastic zip bags. These cards will be shared with a partner and could be reused from class to class.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To begin the lesson, place students into pairs and pass out a “Foreign and Domestic Policy Packet” to each student. 2. Ask student pairs to work to define what is meant by the term ‘national interest’. Once the pair agrees on a definition, have them record it under the ‘my definition’ portion in the table at the top of page one of the packet. 3. As pairs discuss and grapple with defining the term, circulate the room to monitor for engagement. Teacher Note: If students need additional scaffolding, you could ask them what is meant when someone says ‘do what is in your best interest’. 4. Once students have had a few minutes to work out what they think the term means, solicit a few responses. 5. Project slide 1 of the “Foreign and Domestic Policy Definitions” slides, leading students to the understanding that the term ‘national interest’ refers to the nation’s economic, military, political, and/or cultural goals and ambitions. Explain that one of the primary responsibilities of the national government is to advance the national interest. Have students record this definition under the ‘class definition’ portion of the table. 6. Continue the activity by having pairs discuss and define the terms ‘foreign’ and ‘domestic’, recording their definitions on page one of the packet. 7. After students brainstorm, ask students to share responses. 8. Project slide 2 of the “Foreign and Domestic Policy Definitions” slides and ensure they have a strong understanding that ‘foreign’ has to do with other countries, while ‘domestic’ refers to inside our country. Have students record these definitions under the “class definition” column. 9. Explain to students that in this lesson they will learn about both foreign and domestic policy. They will also learn about how the national government uses foreign and domestic policy to advance our national interest. 10. Pass out the “Foreign vs. Domestic Policy Intro” reading. 11. Complete the reading as a whole class, modeling text marking strategies for students. Teacher Note: If students are still struggling after the reading to identify the differences between the two terms, you could play these short videos on “Domestic Policy Summary” (0:57) and “What is Foreign Policy?” (4:45) to deepen their knowledge. 12. Pass out a set of the “Foreign vs. Domestic Policy Sorting Cards” to each pair. 13. Ask students to use what they have learned from the reading and discussion to sort the cards/examples into two groups: Foreign and Domestic. 14. As you walk around to check their answers, ask them why they chose to place them the way they did. What key words did they use? 15. After the cards are sorted, have students look through the examples on the cards and choose one example of domestic policy and one example of foreign policy and record those in the ‘examples’ section on page 1 of their packet.

DAY 2	<p>Planning Note: Prior to the start of class, copy and cut out enough “The Cabinet Placards” so each pair can receive three. You may choose to laminate and/or organize in folders to reuse from class to class and year to year.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have students take out their “Foreign and Domestic Policy Packet” from Day 1 and review the difference between foreign and domestic policy. 2. Ask students the following discussion questions: Who/What branches of the national government are involved in issues surrounding foreign and domestic policy? (Congress/Legislative Branch; President/Executive Branch) 3. Explain to students that another component of the government that is heavily involved in domestic and foreign policy is the Cabinet. The Cabinet is part of the executive branch and acts as an advisory group to the president. There are currently 15 executive departments. The heads of each department are appointed by the president and confirmed by the U.S. Senate. 4. Tell students that today, they will look at the Cabinet in order to gain a deeper understanding of the main issues and goals of domestic and foreign policy in the United States. 5. Place students back in pairs and have them locate ‘The Cabinet’ section in their packet. 6. Review the activity instructions as a whole class: Students will receive descriptions of three different departments in the Cabinet. Their task is to summarize the issues that the department is responsible for and then determine if they deal with foreign, domestic or both areas of policy. 7. Pass out three Cabinet department readings from the “The Cabinet Placards” to each pair. 8. Provide time for students to read their descriptions and fill out the appropriate rows in their packet. 9. As students work, circulate and monitor progress, checking for engagement and offering assistance to groups as necessary. <p>Teacher Note: You may want to set a timer for this portion of the lesson.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Bring the class back together. 11. Beginning at the top of the sheet with the Department of Agriculture, select a group that had that reading to share what they learned with the class. Allow any other groups that read about the Department of Agriculture to add or elaborate. Students who did not complete that reading should be listening and filling in that row. 12. Continue the process from step 11 until information on all 15 Cabinet departments has been shared and students have completed all rows. 13. End class by distributing the “Day 2 Ticket Out The Door” half-sheet and having students answer: What are two domestic policy issues? What are two foreign policy issues? What is an example of a Cabinet department that deals with both foreign and domestic policy? 14. Collect the tickets as students exit the room.
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DAY 3	<p>Planning Note: Prior to the start of class, copy and cut enough “Voting Cards” for your class.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project slide 1 of the “Vocabulary Concept Circles” slides. Have students read the terms and attempt to identify the connections/relationship between all of the words. 2. Ask for a few students to share responses. 3. Project slide 2 of the “Vocabulary Concept Circles” slides and have students attempt to identify the connections/relationship between this new set of terms. 4. Ask for a few students to share responses. 5. Explain to students that when the legislative and executive branches are making domestic and foreign policy decisions, they are always keeping the national interest in mind.
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| | <ol style="list-style-type: none">6. Pass out the “Methods for Pursuing National Interest” reading and have students get back out their “Foreign and Domestic Policy Packet” from Days 1 & 2.7. Complete the reading as a whole class, modeling text marking strategies for students.8. After reading, have students identify three means available to the national government to pursue the United States’ national interest according to text, and record their responses in the appropriate box in their packet.9. Place students into pairs and distribute a set of “Voting Cards” to each pair.10. Project the “Foreign Policy Scenarios” slides adapted from iCivics one at a time. Read each scenario aloud to the class and instruct the students to determine if the foreign policy scenario deals with an issue related to military action, a treaty/executive agreement, or foreign aid. Once the pairs have determined their answer, they will hold up the appropriate card.
<i>Teacher Note:</i> Use the answer key below to help check for understanding. Some scenarios have more than one correct answer.11. Call on a pair to explain the text that led them to their chosen answer.
<i>Teacher Note:</i> You could also follow-up a few scenarios by asking students the potential domestic policy implications and connections to domestic national interest.12. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment): Instruct students to write a well-crafted informative response using the following prompt:
<u>Prompt:</u> Choose one of these three methods available to the national government to pursue our national interest: Foreign Aid, Military Action, Treaty/Executive Agreement. Once you have chosen, explain how the government would pursue our national interest using that method. |
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Civics Content Vocabulary

Word/Term	Definition
alliance	a union between nations for assistance and protection
allies	nations united with another for some common purpose such as assistance and protection
ambassador	a person sent as the chief representative of his or her own government in another country
cabinet	advisory council for the president consisting of the heads of the executive departments, the vice president, and a few other officials selected by the president
diplomacy	the work of keeping good relations between the governments of different countries
diplomat	a person employed or skilled in diplomacy
doctrine	the principles in a system of belief
domestic	originating within a country and especially one's own country
domestic affairs	issues or concerns in one's own country
domestic policy	a government's decisions about issues within the country
embassy	the residence or office of a country's ambassador
executive agreements	agreements between the U.S. and a foreign government that are made by the executive branch and do not require a formal treaty with Senate ratification
foreign	situated outside a place or country
foreign affairs	issues or concerns about other countries around the world
foreign policy	a government's decisions about relationships with other countries
international relations	relationship between nations around the world
national interest	a nation's economic, military, political, and/or cultural goals and ambitions
treaty	an agreement or arrangement between two or more countries

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Civics 360 Resources](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- N/A

ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: Foreign vs. Domestic Policy Sorting Cards

Sample Answers: Foreign and Domestic Policy Packet

Sample Answers: Day 2 Ticket Out The Door

Sample Answers: Foreign Policy Scenarios

Written Response: Sample Scoring Rubric

SOURCES

iCivics Lesson Plan – Foreign Policy: War & Peace and Everything In Between:

<http://www.icivics.org/teachers/lesson-plans/foreign-policy-war-peace-and-everything-between>

The Cabinet: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/about-the-white-house/our-government/the-executive-branch/>,

Accessed July 2023

U.S. National Interests from the U.S. Department of State:

https://1997-2001.state.gov/global/general_foreign_policy/00_perf_1.pdf and

<https://2009-2017.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/perfrpt/2002/html/18996.htm>