



THE UNITED STATES AND INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

SS.7.CG.4.3 Describe examples of the United States' actions and reactions in international conflicts.

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2023 BENCHMARK UPDATES

- Updated from SS.7.C.4.3
 - Changed from “Describe examples of how the United States has ~~dealt with~~ international conflicts.” to “Describe examples of the United States’ actions and reactions in international conflicts.”
- Depth of Knowledge Changes within Benchmark
 - No changes
- Benchmark Clarification Changes
 - Changed from “Students will identify specific examples of international conflicts in which the United States has been involved.” and “Students will identify the reasons for the United States becoming involved in past international conflicts” and merged to create “Students will identify specific examples of and the reasons for United States’ involvement in international conflicts.”
 - Changed from “Students will identify the different methods used by the United States to deal with international conflicts.” to “Students will identify the different methods used by the United States to deal with international conflict (e.g., diplomacy, espionage, humanitarian efforts, peacekeeping operations, sanctions, war.)”
- Vocabulary Changes
 - Addition of diplomacy, espionage, and sanctions

Essential Teacher Content Background Information

[Teacher Content Notes Not Appropriate For Student Use]

This section addresses the following topics:

1. War Powers and the President
2. The President as Commander-in-Chief
3. War Powers Timeline
4. Methods Used by the United States to Deal with International Conflict

1. War Powers and the President

The United States Constitution divides war powers between Congress and the President. Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution grants Congress the power to declare war, control war funding, raise and support the armed forces, and affirms the “*Power...to make all Laws which shall be necessary and proper for carrying into Execution...all other Powers vested by this Constitution in the Government of the United States, or in any Department or Officer thereof.*” Article II, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution states that, “*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...*”

Congress has officially declared war five times: the War of 1812 (1812-1815), The Mexican-American War (1846-1848), the Spanish-American War (1898), World War I (1914-1918; the U.S. entered World War I in 1917) and World War II (1939-1945; the U.S. entered World War II in 1941). Presidents have often interpreted their role as Commander-in-Chief as allowing them to use the U.S. military to “...preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States,” as stated in their Oath of Office. As a result, presidents have used the U.S. military frequently without formal declarations of war from Congress. Some of the best known examples of the president acting as Commander-in-Chief without a formal declaration of war from Congress include the Civil War (1861-1865), the Korean War (1950-1953), the Vietnam War (1964-1975), the Gulf War I (1990-1991), and Gulf War II (2003-2011).

2. The President as Commander-in-Chief

The president serves as Commander-in-Chief during wartime (whether declared or not) and during other international conflicts that may not involve armed conflict such as threats or attacks on citizens. Modern presidents have taken action when secret operations are involved and when diplomatic efforts have failed. Recent examples of this presidential practice include John F. Kennedy’s (D, 1961-1963) involvement in the Bay of Pigs Invasion (1961) and the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962). President Jimmy Carter’s (D, 1977-1981) attempt to rescue embassy hostages in Iran (1980), and Ronald Reagan’s (R, 1981-1989) incursions in Lebanon (1982), Grenada (1983), and the Persian Gulf (1987-1988). This trend continued with President George H.W. Bush’s (R, 1989-1993) removal of Panamanian President Manuel Noriega (1989), and President Bill Clinton’s (D, 1993-2001) military interventions involving the civil wars of Bosnia, Kosovo, and Macedonia (1993-2000). President George W. Bush (R, 2001-2009) secured authorization from Congress for military action to overthrow the Taliban in Afghanistan (2002), and for the invasion of Iraq (2002) in response to the terrorist acts that took place on September 11, 2001.

3. War Powers Timeline

| Date | Event |
|--------------------|--|
| 1914 | The Triple Entente of Great Britain, France and Russia goes to war against the Triple Alliance: Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy. The United States stayed neutral until it can no longer ignore German submarine attacks on passenger and merchant ships. |
| February 26, 1917 | President Woodrow Wilson asks Congress for authority to arm American merchant ships with U.S. naval personnel and equipment; a filibuster thwarts his request. Wilson then arms ships by executive order, citing authority from an old anti-piracy law. On April 6, 1917, Congress handed him a declaration of war on Germany. (War is declared on Austria-Hungary in December.) U.S. involvement tips the balance against Germany, which signs a cease-fire pact Nov. 11, 1918. |
| December 7, 1941 | Attack on Pearl Harbor, which leads to U.S. engagement in World War II. During the war, President Franklin Roosevelt wields great, unchecked power. The slogan "politics stops at the water's edge" represented new bipartisanship in foreign policy. |
| June 24, 1950 | North Korea invaded South Korea; the next day, the U.N. Security Council calls for a withdrawal, and on June 26, President Harry Truman announces that the United States will "vigorously support the effort of the Council to terminate this serious breach of the peace." Congress and the public are told on June 27 that Truman has dispatched warships and planes to aid South Korea. The president describes U.S. involvement as a police action carried out on behalf of the United Nations. "We are not at war," he says. On June 30, he authorized the use of ground troops and bombing missions. |
| August 7, 1964 | Congress passes Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in response to reports that North Vietnamese torpedo boats attacked U.S. vessels. The resolution allows for the defense of U.S. forces and allies, and is used by Presidents Lyndon B. Johnson and later Richard M. Nixon to permit military action in Southeast Asia, despite a divided Congress. The resolution was repealed in 1970. |
| November 7, 1973 | Creation of the War Powers Act. Despite a veto by President Nixon, the Resolution passed Congress and was made law. Under the resolution, the president must notify Congress when he sends troops into areas where "imminent" hostilities are likely, and withdraw the troops within 60 days unless Congress declares war, authorizes the operation or extends the deadline. |
| August 10, 1990 | Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, seizing it as a new province. After several months of U.N. resolutions, Iraq ignores a deadline to withdraw. Congress grants authority to President George H.W. Bush to use military force to oust Iraqi forces. The allied attack began on Jan. 17, 1991. |
| September 11, 2001 | Terrorist members of al Qaeda attack the World Trade Center and Pentagon, compelling President George W. Bush to send troops to fight the Taliban in Afghanistan. |
| November, 2001 | The Bush administration announces vast cuts in the U.S. nuclear arsenal, proposes reorganizing the Immigration and Naturalization and signs an order allowing terrorists to be tried in military tribunals, all without Congressional approval. The Bush administration maintains that presidential powers naturally swell in times of crisis - inflating Bush's "dominance over American government exceeding that of other post-Watergate presidents and rivaling even Franklin D. Roosevelt's command," according to a Nov. 20, 2001, <i>Washington Post</i> article by Dana Milbank. |
| October 11, 2002 | President George W. Bush pushes for an invasion of Iraq, arguing that the country has terrorist links and possesses weapons of mass destruction. On Oct. 11, Congress granted him authority to commit U.S. forces. The House adopts the resolution 296-133; the Senate, 77-23. Bush is unable to gain U.N. support, however. The United States attacks on March 19, 2003, but no weapons of mass destruction are found. Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein was captured in |

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| | December. The Iraqis executed him in December 2006 in connection with a 1982 massacre. A U.S. troop drawdown began in 2009, with December 15, 2011 becoming the official end date to the war. |
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Sources: “War Powers Act Timeline”, OnPolitics Political News, *The Washington Post*, available at: http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/onpolitics/articles/timeline_politics1.html
“Timelines-War Powers”, Annenberg Classroom, available at: <http://www.annenbergclassroom.org/timeline/war-powers>

4. Methods Used by the United States to Deal with International Conflict

When the United States engages in international conflict, there are multiple tools/methods at their disposal. These include: diplomacy, espionage, humanitarian aid, military action, peacekeeping operations, sanctions, and war. Often, as seen throughout history, a combination of these methods is used. Sometimes, the United States employs these methods in conjunction with other nations, as a result of being part of an alliance or a member of an international organization. The decision of which method(s) to use, as well as the implementation of the method(s), may come from Congress, the president, or an executive agency. It is important to remember, as stated above, the U.S. Constitution does specify in Article I, Section 8 that a declaration of war must come from Congress.

Lesson Summary

| ESSENTIAL QUESTION | | |
|---|------------------------|----------------------|
| How and why has the U.S. become involved in international conflicts throughout history? What methods are available for the U.S. to use when determining the best course of action in international conflicts? | | |
| BENCHMARK | | |
| SS.7.CG.4.3 Describe examples of the United States' actions and reactions in international conflicts. | | |
| CIVICS EOC REPORTING CATEGORY | | |
| N/A | | |
| OVERVIEW | | |
| In this lesson, students will examine conflict and cooperation using past and current international events, and they will analyze the conditions, actions, and motivations of past and current international events. | | |
| BENCHMARK CLARIFICATIONS | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will identify specific examples of and the reasons for the United States' involvement in international conflicts. Students will analyze primary source documents pertaining to international incidents to determine the course of action taken by the United States. Students will identify the different methods used by the United States to deal with international conflict (e.g., diplomacy, espionage, humanitarian efforts, peacekeeping operations, sanctions, war). | | |
| BENCHMARK CONTENT LIMITS | | |
| N/A | | |
| CIVICS CONTENT VOCABULARY | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bay of Pigs, conflict, conflict resolution, cooperation, Cuban Missile Crisis, diplomacy, espionage, Gulf War I, Gulf War II, humanitarian action, international conflict, international cooperation, Iran Hostage Crisis, Korean War, Kosovo Conflict, military action, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, peacekeeping operations, sanctions, terrorism, United Nations, U.S. State Department, war, Vietnam War, World War I, World War II | | |
| INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES | | |
| Reading of complex text | Use of primary sources | Cooperative learning |
| MATERIALS | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlighters Sticky notes or 3x5 index cards Poster board (minimum of 9) | | |

- Art supplies
- Colored markers
- Conflict and Cooperation Definitions slides
- International Policy Tools activity sheet
- International Policy Tools slides
- U.S. Department of State website (external link)
- United Nations Peacekeeping website (external link)
- United Nations: Deliver Humanitarian Aid website (external link)
- CIA World Factbook: Military Deployments website (external link)
- International Conflicts Analysis activity sheet
- International Scenario Readings: World War I (1914-1918), World War II (1939-1945)- Franklin D. Roosevelt audio clip, Korean War (1950-1953), Vietnam War (1955-1975), Bay of Pigs Invasion (1961), The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), Iran Hostage Crisis (1979-1981), Gulf War I (1991), The Kosovo Conflict (1998- 1999), and Gulf War II (2003-2011)

B.E.S.T. STANDARDS

- 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.7.R.2.1- Explain how individual text sections and/or features convey a purpose in texts.
- ELA.7.R.3.2- Paraphrase content from grade-level texts.
- 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.
- ELA.K12.EE.1.1- Cite evidence to explain and justify reasoning.

Suggested Student Activity Sequence & Pace

| DAY | ACTIVITY SEQUENCE |
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| DAY 1 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To begin the lesson, ask students to reflect and share what the term ‘conflict’ means to them (middle school student perspective). 2. Project the “Conflict and Cooperation Definitions” slides. Using slide #1, display the definition of ‘conflict’ on the board for students to see and compare to what they came up with. 3. Ask students to think of an example of conflict in their lives. Allow students to time share out. 4. Using slide #2, ask students what ‘international conflict’ might mean and allow them time to discuss. 5. Using slide #3, share the definition of ‘international conflict’ on the board and allow students time to think and brainstorm any international conflicts they have learned about in school. 6. Next, ask students to reflect and share what the term ‘cooperation’ means to them (middle school student perspective). 7. Using slide #4, display the definition of ‘cooperation’ on the board for students to see and compare to what they came up with. 8. Ask students to share an example of a time they cooperated with a friend, family member, etc. 9. Using slide #5, ask students what ‘international cooperation’ might mean and allow them time to discuss how this might relate to ‘international conflict’. 10. Using slide #6, display the definition of ‘international cooperation’ on the board for students to see and reflect. 11. Explain to students that throughout this lesson, they will learn about a variety of international conflicts and international cooperations in which the U.S. has been involved. 12. Share with students that when the U.S. deals with international incidents, there are multiple methods they can use when determining the best course of action. These methods include: military action, diplomacy, espionage, humanitarian efforts, peacekeeping operations, sanctions, or war. 13. Provide each student a copy of the “International Policy Tools” activity sheet. As a class, use the “International Policy Tools” slides to directly teach about the different methods/options available to the U.S. when determining their course of action with international conflicts. Students should summarize notes in appropriate boxes. Teacher Note: Use the Teacher Background Information to expand on slides. For each tool/method, ask students: What might be a situation where you could see the U.S. choosing this method? What might be some advantages/disadvantages to using this method? Do you think there might be times when multiple methods would need to be used? 14. After finishing the notes, project the “U.S. Department of State” website and hover over the ‘Policy Issues’ tab and share some of the diplomatic issues that the State Department is currently focused on. 15. Explain to students that also, as a member of the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the U.S. supports the UN and NATO and their efforts in peacekeeping operations and humanitarian action. Teacher Note: If SS.7.CG.4.2 has been taught prior to this benchmark this will be a review, if not this will provide the background information for SS.7.CG.4.2. 16. Project the “United Nations Peacekeeping” website and briefly tour the site for students to gain a sense of the different peacekeeping operations that the UN is currently focused on. |

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| | <p>Complete the same process for humanitarian action, by briefly touring the “United Nations: Deliver Humanitarian Aid” website.</p> <p>17. Lastly, use the “CIA World Factbook: Military Deployments” website to examine the current locations and numbers of U.S. military deployments (scroll down to ‘United States’)</p> <p>18. As students leave for the day, have them respond to the following question on a post-it note or index card: Why do you think the United States plays a role in world affairs?</p> |
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| DAYS 2-3 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Have students take out their completed “International Policy Tools” activity sheet from the previous day. Briefly review the methods as a class. 2. Move students into small cooperative groups and pass out the “International Conflicts Analysis” activity sheet and the “International Scenario: World War I (1914-1918)” reading. Teacher Note: You will need at least nine cooperative groups for activities in the lesson. You can have more than nine, but will need a minimum of nine. 3. Explain to students that they will look today at specific historical international conflicts that the U.S. has been involved in, and they will work to examine the actions and reactions of the United States in each scenario. 4. Model the task using the “International Scenario: World War I (1914-1918)” reading. Read together as a class, pausing to summarize each section. Upon completion, work together to complete the first section of the activity sheet, ensuring students are locating text evidence for each answer. Teacher Note: Use the answer key below to help guide the discussion. It is important to point out to students that often, the U.S. will use multiple methods when handling each conflict. 5. Explain to students that their cooperative groups will become ‘experts’ on one additional international conflict by reading and completing that section of the activity sheet. They will then present their conflict’s information to the class and teach their peers. 6. Pass out an international scenario reading for one of the following international conflicts to each small group: “International Scenario: World War II (1939-1945)”, “International Scenario: Korean War (1950-1953)”, “International Scenario: Vietnam War (1955-1975)”, “International Scenario: Bay of Pigs Invasion (1961)”, “International Scenario: The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)”, “International Scenario: Iran Hostage Crisis (1979-1981)”, “International Scenario: Gulf War I (1991)”, “International Scenario: The Kosovo Conflict (1998- 1999)”, and “International Scenario: Gulf War II (2003-2011)” readings. Teacher Note: Not all readings are the same length and complexity, so you may want to be strategic with your student grouping and assignment of readings. 7. Provide time for the groups to read and complete the corresponding section of the activity sheet. 8. Upon completion, each group will then create a poster using the notes from their activity sheet to visually share the information they learned from their event, making sure to include a heading at the top with the event. Teacher Note: Challenge students to use visuals and not to rewrite everything from the activity sheet on the poster, to put it in their own words. Students can find images online or show their artistic side and draw them out. 9. Ask students to put their completed posters up around the classroom. 10. Have students take out their “International Conflicts Analysis” activity sheet. Provide each group a colored marker. Explain to students that they will do a gallery walk around the room to learn about the remaining eight international scenarios. As they walk around ask that they: |
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- Read through each poster as a group and discuss the scenario. Look up or ask the teacher if there are any words or ideas they do not understand.
- Complete the section on their activity sheet for that scenario.
- Take the marker provided and underline/circle/star something you did not know, that you learned from the poster.

Teacher Note: You may have to set a timer for each poster and instruct when to rotate in order for the activity to stay organized.

11. Allow students a moment to go back to the poster they created at the end to see what the other groups learned.
12. Bring all students back together and review some of the elements of the activity sheets. Particularly the teacher should ensure students picked up on the different methods used in each scenario.

Teacher Note: It is important that the students walk away not being experts on each historical conflict but seeing how there are multiple international policy tools available to the U.S. when dealing with these situations, and oftentimes multiple are employed.

13. Checking for Understanding (Formative Assessment):

Instruct students to write a well-crafted response to the following prompt:

Prompt:

Choose one of the 10 international conflicts you learned about and provide an example of an action that was taken during this conflict and a reaction as a result (cause and effect). What method(s) were used by the United States to deal with the conflict? Use evidence from the text.

Civics Content Vocabulary

| Word/Term | Definition |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Bay of Pigs | a bay of the Caribbean Sea in Cuba: it was the site of an attempted invasion of Cuba by anti-Fidel Castro forces in April 1961 |
| conflict | a sharp disagreement (between ideas, interests, or purposes) |
| conflict resolution | the process of ending a conflict or disagreement |
| cooperation | the act of working together |
| Cuban Missile Crisis | in October 1962, leaders of the U.S. and the Soviet Union engaged in a tense, 13-day political and military standoff over the placement of nuclear-armed Soviet missiles in Cuba |
| diplomacy | the work of keeping up relations between the governments of different countries |
| espionage | the practice of spying or of using spies, typically by governments to obtain political and military information |
| Gulf War I | a military conflict in 1991 between Iraq and a group of 34 nations; the war was approved by the United Nations and led by the U.S; also known as the Persian Gulf War |
| Gulf War II | the military conflict in Iraq, also called the Iraq War or "Operation Iraqi Freedom", which began March 20, 2003; started by the U.S., Great Britain, and other nations |
| humanitarian efforts | work focused on improving the health and happiness of other people |
| international conflict | a conflict between two different nations or groups |
| international cooperation | when countries have something to gain by working together to solve problems. Countries may cooperate in order to avoid going to war or to manage a resource. |
| Iran Hostage Crisis | a 444-day period during which the new government of Iran after the Iranian Revolution held hostage 66 diplomats and U.S. citizens, beginning on November 4, 1979 and ending on January 20, 1981 |
| Korean War | a war between North and South Korea; South Korea was aided by the U.S. and other countries; it was fought from 1950-1953 |
| Kosovo Conflict | occurred in 1998–99 when ethnic Albanians fought ethnic Serbs and the government of Yugoslavia in Kosovo. The conflict gained widespread international attention and was resolved with the intervention of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). |
| military action | members of the U.S. military (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard) are sent to another country to use force to stop a conflict |

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| North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) | a group of 28 countries that has agreed to protect each other in case of attack; founded in 1949 |
| peacekeeping operations | enforcing a truce between countries or groups by an international military force |
| sanctions | a threatened penalty for disobeying a law or rule. |
| terrorism | the use of extreme fear and violence as a way to achieve a political goal |
| United Nations | an organization founded in 1943 to keep the peace, develop friendly relationships among countries, and improve the quality of life for the world's poor people; consists of 193 member countries |
| U.S. State Department | the federal department of the U. S. government that makes foreign policies; part of the executive branch of the federal government |
| Vietnam War | a military conflict (1954-1975) between the Communist forces of North Vietnam (supported by China and the Soviet Union) and the non-Communist forces of South Vietnam (supported by the U.S.) |
| war | a conflict carried on by force of arms, as between nations or between parties within a nation; warfare, as by land, sea, or air. |
| World War I | a war between the Allied Powers (including Russia, France, British Empire, Italy, the U.S., Japan, Romania, Serbia, Belgium, Greece, Portugal, Montenegro), and the Central Powers (including Germany, Austria-Hungary, Turkey, Bulgaria); that lasted from 1914 to 1918 |
| World War II | a war that began in 1937 in Asia, in 1939 in Europe, and in 1941 in the U.S.; it lasted until 1945 and involved most of the world's countries |

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Civics 360 Resources](#)

Florida Department of Education's Civic Literacy Reading List

- N/A

ANSWER KEYS

Sample Answers: International Policy Tools activity sheet

Sample Answers: International Conflicts Analysis activity sheet

Written Response: Sample Scoring Rubric

SOURCES

U.S. State Department's website: <http://www.state.gov/>

United Nations websites: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en> and

<http://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/deliver-humanitarian-aid/>

CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/field/military-deployments/>

World War I reading: <http://www.kidzworld.com/article/5701-overview-of-world-war-i> and

http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson_75_Notes.htm and

https://www.ducksters.com/history/world_war_i/

“Day of Infamy Speech” Audio File: <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/1436350>

Korean War reading: http://www.ducksters.com/history/cold_war/korean_war.php and

<https://www.trumanlibrary.gov/education/presidential-inquiries/united-nations-korea>

Vietnam War reading: https://www.ducksters.com/history/cold_war/vietnam_war.php

Bay of Pigs reading: http://www.ducksters.com/history/cold_war/bay_of_pigs.php

Cuban Missile Crisis reading: http://www.ducksters.com/history/cold_war/cuban_missile_crisis.php

Iran Hostage Crisis reading: <http://www.infoplease.com/encyclopedia/history/iran-hostage-crisis.html>,

http://encyclopedia.kids.net.au/page/mo/Mohammad_Reza_Pahlavi_of_Iran and

http://academickids.com/encyclopedia/index.php/Iran_Hostage_Crisis and

<https://www.cnn.com/2012/01/23/world/meast/iran-sanctions-facts/index.html>

Gulf War I reading: <http://education.yahoo.com/reference/encyclopedia/entry/PersGWar>,

Gulf War II reading: <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/united-states-declares-end-to-iraq-war>

Kosovo reading: <https://kids.britannica.com/students/article/Kosovo/312029> ,

<https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/mission/unmik> , <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/ks.htm>